

NAZARETH NEWS

ISSUE NO. 2

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Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit.

by Jennifer Jackman

This verse from John 12:24 speaks to us about our faith and the cycle of life. Having just completed Holy Week we remember that without Good Friday, there would not be Easter. Without Christ's suffering and death we would not be saved. Jesus lived a life of service and it is his final act of service that models for us the cycle of life. The death and resurrection of Jesus,

the paschal mystery, is the foundation of our faith. As followers of Jesus, we carry our crosses and experience death and resurrection in small ways every day. We need to die to ourselves daily, sometimes hourly, to bring new life to

ourselves and those around us.

Here at Nazareth Farm, we experienced our own "dying" as Rodney completed his term as Director April 30th. Rodney gave much of himself to the Farm and surrounding community. He sacrificed, sweated, and carried many crosses during his term as Director and much life has come from his work. The new dorm is a very obvious example of the harvest Rodney leaves with us. There are many other fruits of his labor, not as obvious, but just as vital. Rodney's time of service here will enable all of us to enjoy "new life" for years to come. As Rodney heads home to Indiana, we thank him for all he has done for Nazareth Farm and pray that God continues to bless him on his journey.

As I begin my term as Director, I know I have a tough act to follow! Rodney has brought the Farm to new heights and I hope to continue this tradition. I look forward to seeing many of you this summer and to serving with you!

FARM ASSISTS LOCAL HABITAT

Nazareth Farm recently worked with Doddridge/Ritchie Habitat for Humanity at the McKinney house in West Union. From the pouring of the foundation in September to the completion of the project in early May, staff and volunteers were there to help build and share in the company.

We regularly worked alongside a crew of dedicated volunteers from the area who offered us their skill and sarcasm. The ever-present Linda McKinney and her son, Chris, were always hard at work around their new house or kidding Habitat's Project Coordinator, Mike Cogar. However, Mike knew how to return fire and managed to finish up the house beautifully.

by Scott Michalman



Nazareth Farm volunteers attach siding to the McKinney's new Habitat house in West Union. photo/Larry Spollen

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5/97

INTRODUCING GAIL WILLIAMSON

by Anne Niebler

Along with numerous volunteers, Gina and I spent the first week of January replacing a ceiling and bathroom walls for the Dillons. Much thanks and credit go to five-year-old Heather Dillon for her expert hammering assistance and loads of advice.

The next week, we started working for an all around terrific guy, Gail Williamson. Gina ended up fixing and painting a ceiling while I was once again relegated to spend more than the usual quality time in the bathroom.

We faced a few minor challenges, such as crumbly ceiling tiles and the need for two big ladders in a very small bathroom. This required a laborious evacuation whenever people needed to use the facilities. Rodney even came out for a day and put on a new front door, with no problems that couldn't be solved by the reverse switch on his drill. But as much as we enjoyed the work, the best part about being at Gail's was hanging out with Gail himself.

Gail warmed up right away to Naz Farm hugging, and greeted each volunteer with a big hug and a smile. All our work received a thumbs up or an enthusiastic, "Fine! Fine!". Everyone enjoyed visiting with him. He showed us his assortment of birdfeeders which he can pull up on pulleys and fill from his bedroom window. We also heard stories about his mice Tom and Jack, played "Dots", and just generally acted goofy with him.

Gail started coming to dinner on Community Night of the first week we worked there, and has not missed one since. He liked Andy's "Death by Chocolate" dessert so much that he insisted on getting the recipe. Gail love meeting people and sharing in the meal and the prayer, as well as starting tickling fights that cause grand upheaval and disorder. Despite some physical disabilities, he seems to have more energy than any of us.

Since January, we have continued to do some other work for Gail. Gina recently went back to paint and Rodney put in a new outside light for him. Still, we mostly just enjoy his friendship. All of us with the good fortune to spend time with him, have been truly touched by his spirit, his graciousness, and his marvelous joy for life.

STAFF REFLECTIONS ON HOLY WEEK '97

Something had caught my attention; silence. It was the first time, I had experienced silence all week. Then I remembered all the love, laughter, and thought that had spun through this week and decided that it had definitely been the most full Holy Week I had ever experienced. We started out the week going out to sites in the community just as we do on a regular week. But each day our numbers grew as people from every facet of our community began to gather. By Thursday, sixty-eight people crowded into the dining room with barely enough elbow room left to eat. Thus began a very festive Jewish Seder supper, to celebrate our heritage. After dinner and a whole lot of dishes we gathered in a more subdued dining room to

reflect upon how the passion of Jesus gave new meaning to the Seder supper. Following mass, we began an all-night vigil in remembrance of Jesus' call to His disciples to wait with him. Friday, we reenacted the stations of the cross on a ten mile walk. During those stations individuals reflected on how the story of Jesus is repeated in their own dyings and risings. As I looked back upon all these events, I marveled at how complex the week had seemed while in the midst of it. However, now, on Saturday morning in silence, the week seemed so simple. We gathered together to share once again the story that is at the core of our Christian lives; to remember, "our lives are in your hands oh Lord."

by Gina Fosco

BARGAIN STORE RECOVERS FROM FIRE

Early in the morning of March 1, an arson fire tore through a building in Pennsborough which housed the Bargain Cellar as well as several apartments. The entire building was destroyed, but thankfully no one was injured. With the help of Nazareth Farm volunteers and overwhelming community support, the Bargain Cellar quickly came back and reopened its doors on April 1 at a new nearby location.

The Bargain Cellar is a non-profit resale shop which employs about 7 people between locations in Pennsborough and West Union. Parish groups from throughout the country donate the bulk of their stock of used clothing and furniture. These items are then resold at a price low enough to cover their operating costs. Since the store opened in 1989, Nazareth Farm has been there to help out in whatever way needed. Therefore, upon hearing of the tragic fire we immediately offered our assistance.

After the fire, all that remained of the Bargain Cellar were its two tall exterior signs. Vicky Cutright, the manager of the store, said the signs were a sign from God that they would soon rebuild. Within two weeks, they found a new store to rent on the other side of town. During Holy Week, Gina and I brought work groups from the Farm there to help convert this space to suit their needs. We put up walls, made hanger racks, and even reattached those old signs.

While we worked, it became apparent how important the Bargain Cellar is to the local community. A steady flow of visitors stopped in daily to check up on our progress. Almost a week before reopening, Vicky and her dedicated staff had already stocked the store with a new shipment. They also worked along with us, often painting walls just minutes after we put them up.

At their April 1 reopening, the Bargain Cellar had one of their busiest sale days ever. Thanks definitely go out to all of you who consistently support them. If you would like to help or find a collection site in your area, please contact Vicky at (304)659-2237.

by Andy Whelpley



Thank you for showing us how to laugh, to prey, to build and to love.

WHO'S ON FIRST - STAFF UPDATES

So what are we all doing? Well, **Megan** is taking over as house manager until Sr. Paula arrives in June. **Scott's** parents recently visited and brought us lots of treats. **Anne** has decided to defer grad school for a year so she can work on our gardens with Meg. **Gina** has mastered stick shifting and hopes to drive a big rig soon. **Andy** has come up with a plan to avoid the real world for a few more years. **Pam** continues to adroitly handle our office work and joins us for dinner when she can. **Tom**

has been greeting volunteers and setting up our projects for the summer. After 18 months of service, **Matt** is planning to pack up his fiddle and head back to Indiana at the end of May. He says he will miss the smelly staff.

Jen and her dog, **Casey** are getting into the groove of things and we know they will do well. Before leaving, **Rodney** told Jen to have fun with the job. He did. He put his whole heart into answering his call and steps down leaving his mark on us all.

WISH LIST

A special thanks goes to the Niebler family and the Spollen family for recently donating several much needed power tools. Matt thinks they are very cool. If you are able and would like to get the same glowing approval, please help us meet some of our current needs:

- ◆ safety glasses or goggles
- ◆ an industrial quality vacuum cleaner
- ◆ hammocks
- ◆ peanut butter (for local Food Pantry)
- ◆ an animal carrier (for cats or dogs)

☺☺MUCHAS GRACIAS☺☺

Muchas gracias go out to these groups for recent contributions to the Farm:

- * Fordham Prep; Bronx, NY
- * St. Anne Church and Sacred Heart Church; Terre Haute, IN
- * St. John Vianney H.S.; Homdel, NJ
- * Notre Dame H.S.; Elmira, NY
- * St. Louis DeMontfort Church; Fishers, IN
- * St. Monica Church; Indianapolis
- * Presentation Church; Lee's Summit, MO
- * Bishop Joseph Inesch of the Diocese of Joliet, IL