

January 16, 1992

Greetings from what is finally a cold and snowy Center Point, West Virginia. The staff returned healthily and full of energy from Christmas break. We have just finished our second full winter term volunteer week. We continue to stand in awe of the miracles God chooses to work into the lives of the people we serve, in the volunteers who come to serve, (who are directly and indirectly served) and us the staff.

The recession to which I am sure we are all atuned to by now despite economic strata, hit the economically disadvantaged (poor) first and hardest. Somehow they manage to cope and survive. In my introduction of the people of the area to the volunteers, I start by saying, "These people are survivors." I follow it by saying, "They truly know the joy of God, family, and friends." To me it puts things in proper perspective. When one is poor, or should I say when one recognizes his or her own poverty, one clings to those things which bring him or her strength, peace, and true security. I think this is one of the great lessons of the economically disadvantaged - what gives and natures LIFE!

My first two months here have been filled with unexpected joy and a multitude of change. The joy emanates from a variety of interpersonal and communal experiences. First it was the postlady, Doris Ann, saying, "Would you like me put those stamps on your envelopes for you? There were seventy five of stamps and envelopes. Then there is the story of people like Seppie Walters and Karolyn Swiger spending two full days without coercion in there respective kitchens baking dozens upon dozens of cookies for the annual Christmas Party (slight tangent - The Christmas party was a huge success with over 700 people mostly children receiving presents). Then I met the chief farm mechanic, Allen Cutright. Yesterday he spent five hours searching for a way to save the farm \$500.00 in new parts for the farm's Suburban. Eventually by perusing a junk yard he got us the right part for less than ten percent of the original cost. People here emulate and give new meaning to the phrase, "It is better to give than to receive." Yes, I probably sound as if I am wearing rose colored glasses, and still riding out the honeymoon of a new job. Maybe I am: However, nothing can take away or invalidate those experiences which I have had. They are authentic, sincere, and imbedded in my thoughts as I approach and meet new people each day.

The changes have been rapid; the community has remained strong, and has been strengthened amidst it all. Upon my arrival in mid-November, was the departure of Karen and Kay collectively with their seven years of service to the farm. Then co-director Cathy Egan's mother became incapacitated with chronic and incorrecible back pain. This caused Cathy to resign her position on the staff in December in order to be with and serve her mother. In early January, Martha White joined us to bring a fresh, youthful female presence to our staff. At the same time, Dave Dominiak, a veteran staff person of nine months, informed us of a fantastic business opportunity he had laying in his lap in Chicago. Dave accepted the position and will be

leaving next week; he will be dearly missed.

Yes, lots of change! I do not mean to diminish the magnitude of the change with abbreviation to a paragraph, only to highlight another fact. The fact being that even though the change has had an impact, we have survived and continued to stay focused to the mission of the farm - A community of faith and justice focused on service to others, not to itself.

Being quote, "director" end quote, I must say, this is the best staff with whom I have had the privilege of working. They are full of life and laughter, are willing to accept responsibility, and to make things happen. They believe in the Kingdom, and recognize that they are called to help build it. Great things are happening and the ingredients blend well for some marvelous fruits to ripen (I threw that analogy in for Joan).

Your prayers, letters, cards, and donations continue to propel us. Financially, times have been tight as people have needed to tighten their purse and wallet strings. We too have tightened our own spending by searching for new and creative ways to be thrifty. Please know we greatly appreciate whatever you can donate. We would also ask you to keep your eyes and ears open for people who no longer find a need, or use for, tools. We would even spend some money on good used electric tools, if the price is right. Enough of the financial pitch; we need help. Thanks for whatever you can do.

In closing, please continue to know that we keep you in our prayers. We ask the same of you for us and the people with whom we work. With support from you and the excited youths coming to volunteer, we can make dreams realities, and continue to sow seeds of faith and justice.

In Christ's Peace,

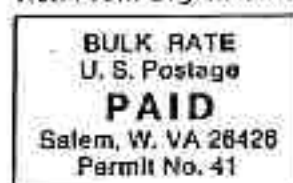
Mike Abramowski

Mike Abramowski and

All of us at the farm including the dogs and cats!

NAZARETH FARM
*The Association of Volunteers
for Christian Service*
Little Battle Run
Center Point, W. VA 26339

Non-Profit Organization



Presorted