

Upcoming Activities and Programs

- Circles is gearing up for many wonderful programs and activities. We are currently collecting school supplies for CATE'S KIDS BACK TO SCHOOL PROGRAM. Again, Allison House will coordinate this program during the months of July and August. Donation deadline is September 1st.
- Frank Jaklitsch and some of his musician friends will entertain us at IRISH NIGHT to be held on October 2nd at 6:00p.m. at Mercy Center. Why not get a group together and have a relaxing night of song and laughter?
- On October 15th we will begin to solicit donors for our Christmas "ADOPT A FAMILY PROGRAM". With our difficult economy, we will need many people to support this important program.
- On November 22nd we will begin our Annual Holiday Appeal. We are always delighted to receive your end of the year contributions to help further the work of Circles of Mercy.
- On January 24th we will begin our VITA TAX PREPARATION PROGRAM. This is a free service offered to those who have limited incomes. Have you ever thought about becoming a VITA Tax Preparer? For information about this or any other program, please call us at 462-0899.

Make a Gift to Circles of Mercy

Is there a loved one whom you would like to remember in a special way for a birthday, anniversary, or even at the time of death? Why not honor him or her with a donation to Circles of Mercy? If you choose, donations will be recognized in future newsletters. We will also send a personal acknowledgment of your gift. Contributions to Circles of Mercy are tax deductible. Please call us at 518-462-0899 for further information.

I am enclosing my gift of \$ _____

In honor of: (living) _____

In memory of: (deceased) _____

PLEASE SEND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Please mention my loved one (name only) in your newsletter:

Yes No



SPONSORED BY
THE SISTERS OF MERCY
NORTHEAST COMMUNITY

Mission Statement:

Circles of Mercy honors the dignity of each person, offers hospitality and provides services to instill hope and empower individuals to reach their full potential.

SUMMER 2010

VOLUME 9

Number 2

Director:

Richard Zazycki

Hours:

M-F, 9 a.m.– 4 p.m.

Programs:

- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Computer Training
- Support Groups
- Parenting Classes
- Self Enhancement Groups
- Professional Clothing
- Advocacy
- Catherine's Closet

Circles of Mercy
11 Washington Street
Rensselaer, NY 12144

• • • Circles of Mercy has more than a twelve-year tradition of providing hope, hospitality and empowerment to individuals in the Rensselaer Community, especially women and women with children. • • •

Connections

A TASTE OF MERCY

On Thursday evening, June 10, Circles of Mercy's gala and signature fundraising event was held at Carmela's Banquet House in Rensselaer. The event was an overwhelming success raising over \$23,500.

This year Nancy LaRow, the first director of Circles of Mercy and a current trustee, was honored with the Hope and Hospitality Award, in recognition of her dedication to improving the quality of life of those whom Circles serves and her continued commitment to its mission. Through this award Circles of Mercy applauds Nancy for the support she provides and recognizes her efforts in building the organization, especially during its difficult days beginning in September 1997. Nancy has been truly instrumental in the progress Circles has made and the success it has enjoyed throughout the years.



Hope and Hospitality Honoree Nancy L. LaRow accepting the award from Richard Zazycki, Director.

The *Sister Gail A. Rieth Award* for Volunteer Service had two recipients: the Volunteer Staff of Catherine's Closet and the Parishioners of the Church of Saint Mary at Clinton Heights. Both of these groups are responsible for supporting efforts to provide much needed revenue for Circles of Mercy. In addition, they tirelessly give their time to many of the programs that Circles offers its clients. Without their efforts we would not be able to afford or staff many of our services. These volunteers truly make Circles of Mercy possible.



Church of St. Mary at Clinton Heights parishioners accepting the Volunteer Award from Richard Zazycki, Director, are (L. to R.): Betty Brusco, Mary Bobersky Bronk and Raymond Tesiero.



Catherine's Closet Staff accepting the Volunteer Award from Richard Zazycki, are (L. to R.): Tita Dringus, Candice Brady, Rosemary Horan, Shirley Hirt and Kathleen Beers.

Circles of Mercy is grateful to the Gala's Corporate and Honorary donors, those who attended the gala, those who donated goods and services, and all who provided support for this function. Without these important people Circles would not be able to carry out its work. •

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Rensselaer, NY
Permit No. 2

Circles of Mercy Board Members

Rose A. Barba
Sister Patricia Houlihan, RSM
Janice Labas
Nancy L. LaRow
Shannon O'Neill, Ph.D.
Kathleen G. Pingelski
Sister Jane S. Somerville, RSM
Jack M. Sweeney

Corporate Sponsors

Albany Medical Center
M.M. Hayes Company, Inc.
Nigro Companies
Polsinello Fuels, Inc.
Sisters of Mercy Northeast Community
St. Peter's Health Care Services
Stewart's Foundation
Store Away Self Storage, East Greenbush
W.J. Lyons, Jr. Funeral Home, Inc.

CATHERINE'S CLOSET THRIFT SHOP

11 Washington Street
Rensselaer

Open Monday – Friday
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Tuesdays only, until 5 p.m.

Clothes & Household Goods

Connections

A newsletter to promote the mission and values of Circles of Mercy, a program sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy.

Eleanor Guerin, RSM, Editor
Joanne Scheibly, Editor

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Rosa Barba
Nancy LaRow
Kathleen Pingelski
Shannon O'Neill
Mary Linton

Barbara A. Roman, RSM, LAYOUT

Circles of Mercy
11 Washington Street
Rensselaer, NY 12144
518-462-0899 • FAX: 518-462-2892
www.circlesofmercy.org

Spotlight on the Board by Dr. Shannon O'Neill, Ph.D.



Dr. Shannon O'Neill, Ph.D.

I became a member of the board because of my relationship with the remarkable Nancy LaRow. Through Nancy, I had known about Circles of Mercy and how hard she worked in the early days to get the organization up and running. What impresses me most about Circles is the Mercy network and the many people in the community who have a connection to the Sisters of Mercy and their charisma.

While it is all a bit new to me (we had several Benedictines in the family, I currently work with the Franciscans and I was educated by the Christian Brothers, The Jesuits and the Sisters of St. Joseph), it is very inspiring. What I bring to the board is my background in women's issues, education and program administration. I have a Ph.D. in Social-Personality Psychology from SUNY Albany and a B.A. in Women's Studies and Psychology from the College of St. Catherine's. I have worked in the HIV and substance abuse fields and currently serve as the Director of the Sr. Thea Bowman Center for Women at Siena College.

I am so impressed with the administration, volunteers and Board of Trustees at Circles. Their professionalism, service and social justice for the Rensselaer community is inspiring!

Honorary Gifts and Memorial Donations

Circles of Mercy gratefully acknowledges the following donations and gifts.

In Memory of:

Mary T. McDermott –
by Sister M. Amata McDermott, RSM
and Richard Zazycki

Mary Barner – by Friends and Staff at Circles of Mercy

Father Paul Roman – by Eleanor H. McCoy,
Mary A. Femia, Richard Zazycki and Penny Hill

Forcinella and Mehaylo Families –
by Barbara M. Forcinella

Roger Zanin – by Friends and Staff at Circles of Mercy

Josephine M. DiDomenicantonio –
by Mario E. DiDomenicantonio

Ronald McCormick, Sr. – by Marguerite I. McCormick

Catherine A. Fisch – by Terence and Grace Sweeney,
Friends and Staff at Circles of Mercy

Michael W. Reilly – by Marie Reilly

Sister Maureen A. Joyce, RSM –
by Friends and Staff at Circles of Mercy

Ruth E. Beers – by Friends and Staff at Circles of Mercy

Nellie Pascale – by Penny Hill and Richard Zazycki

Catherine and Armand Guerin –
by Sister Eleanor Guerin, RSM

Thomas M. Doyle, Sr. –
by Maureen and Shane Somerville

Thomas C. Barber –
by Maureen and Shane Somerville

Tyler DeMarco – by Maureen and Shane Somerville

Dr. Paul F. Reich, MD –
by Maureen and Shane Somerville

Gerald L. Porter, Jr. –
by Maureen and Shane Somerville

Grace Ryan – Anita Trombley –
by Maureen and Shane Somerville

Jack McNulty, Jr. –
by Maureen and Shane Somerville

In Honor of:

Dorothy Halloran's Birthday –
by Eve and Kevin Halloran

Sister Barbara Dudley's Birthday –
by Barbara J. Wood

Colleen May "Lidwina" Somerville's Confirmation –
by Maureen and Shane Somerville

Sister M. Kathleen Pritty, RSM –
by Marcia and Herb Dunn •

From the Director by Richard Zazycki

The mission of Circles continues to take place with not only the help from our financial benefactors and donors, but also by those who support us as volunteers. I want to tell you about one of "our regulars". She is an amazing and energetic young woman just completing her freshman year at the Academy of the Holy Names. She was recently honored as one of WNYT's *13 Kids Who Care*. After wading through dozens of nominations made by organizations like Circles, WNYT Channel 13 proudly announced this year's *13 Kids Who Care* group. Our volunteer, Allison House, was one of the winners.

An Easter basket filled with goodies is something some kids might take for granted, but not Allison. She's grateful that her family could afford the Easter tradition. Now she's reaching out to



Left to right: Greg Stapleton, Education Manager, Times Union; Stephen P. Baboulis, General Manager, WNYT-NewsChannel 13; Circles of Mercy Honoree Ms. Allison House; Steven P. Boyle, President and CEO, St. Peter's Health Care Services; the Honorable John J. McEneny, NYS Assemblymember, 104th Assembly District, and Jessica Layton, Anchor/Reporter, WNYT-News Channel 13.

kids her age and younger who aren't as fortunate, by volunteering to coordinate both Cate's Kids Easter Baskets and Back-to-School programs. She

will also help with our Christmas Adopt-a-Family program. At last count through her past two years of volunteering efforts, Allison has literally helped over 400 children and their families!

We are very proud and offer congratulations to Allison and to her parents Lisa and Bob House. Thank you Allison for your dedicated service and commitment to Mercy as a volunteer at Circles! Thanks also to St. Peter's Health Care Services for joining with NewsChannel 13 and the Albany Times Union in the *13 Kids Who Care* series and for making a charitable donation to Circles in Allison's honor. The spirit of Mercy is alive, is doing well and is growing at Circles. Our "Circles" of Mercy continues to grow, ever widens, is never ending and is always in need of friends. •

VITA

In April we completed our sixth year as part of the IRS VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program). This year, in addition to Saturdays and some week days, we were able to add evening hours to our schedule. We owe the success of this program to our dedicated team of tax preparers. This year our team grew by two to a total of eleven volunteers. Of this group three have been with us from the beginning. Our preparers include retirees from government and the private sector, teachers, a social worker, a business woman, a computer engineer and business students from Catholic Central High School.

Our volunteers spend time with each client to be sure that they receive all the tax credits to which they are entitled. One single mother was able to claim a windfall of about \$7,000 from previous years because of one of our astute volunteers. This lady was told she was eligible for tax credits she did not claim in the past. We had to help her amend her taxes for the past three years. She was so grateful she returned with flowers as a gift to the person who helped her!

People volunteer for many reasons, but mostly because they see the value in lending a helping hand. They under-

stand how complex and overwhelming filing income taxes can be to the average person. They know that struggling working people rarely have the skills to properly do their own taxes and have to pay a considerable preparation fee for a professional. In addition, this year we saw many people who were unemployed because of the downturn in the economy.

This year our program completed 354 tax returns. Our clients collected over \$664,000 in combined Federal and New York State refunds and credits. This is a lot of money returned to the local economy!

But the program is about more than this. We give each person the unlimited time and attention they need. We treat people with the respect they deserve regardless of their income. Hopefully, we help to make their situation in life a little better. We are always looking for volunteers. Keep us in mind for next January. Complete training is provided and we always work as a team. •

*"Draw persons to God by your words,
by your example, and by the works of Mercy."*

— Catherine McAuley