

News From Sister Kay...



Dear Friends,

Springtime greetings to each of you! You will not be surprised that life within the Durocher Program resembles most of the world with masks covering the faces of participants as we reduce and slow our activities. But, thanks be to God, during this unique situation, we are functioning! In the pages that follow, you can see the good your continuing contributions are making. We are very grateful.

Witness for Peace

A group, smaller than before COVID-19, began to reinstate our monthly Witness for Peace events in mid-September with the decision to get and display a BLACK LIVES MATTER banner. Usually, a high school or college student plans and leads the hour with prayer.



(Above) Witness for Peace on 9-20-2020,
(Left) Jada,
(Right) Marquise and Nick lead Witness for Peace

Scholarships

Within the past ten years, nearly seventy students have been provided with varying amounts of scholarship help. All scholarship recipients were/are involved in Durocher Program activities with strong emphasis on education and giving back to the community. Seventeen of these have attained a BA and several have MA degrees. Many have AA certificates or have attended classes. Currently twenty-one are attending college or university.

Spring Break Volunteers

For the second year, college and high school student volunteers will not be able to help us in the great need for house repairs. Regrets are abundant! However, alternate plans are in the works to provide service.

Kimberly Egoavil (pictured) is student at the Academy of the Holy Names in Tampa.

She interviewed me and she said “I wanted to thank you for your time and for the great words you gave me, and well, the rest of our school. I enjoyed talking to you very much and you gave me a lot of food for thought with your advice. I want to say again, what an honor it was to meet you and I hope to see you in Jonestown soon. Even though COVID has affected the mission trips I’m so glad that our school has been finding ways to reach out through zoom, sending things via mail, livestreams and videos. We’re also going to be listening to a lot of speakers and finding ways to help others despite of the circumstances.”



Volunteer Activities

We were able to continue the tradition of taking Thanksgiving dinners to some Jonestown Senior Citizens and others living alone. Due to safety concerns, our generous young volunteers were three in number rather than the usual eight or nine.

Thanksgiving delivery: Preparing and distributing Christmas gifts for the children was the task of another small but diligent contingent of helpers.



Carolyn with cabbage

Community Garden

So far, the socially distanced tillers, planters and tenders of the Community Garden have been limited to adults. In late summer, we planted turnips, mustards, collards and spinach seeds and throughout the fall and winter, we harvested many crops of greens for delicious and nutritious eating. To date, cabbage seeds are growing in the greenhouse with imminent plans for more seeding. With proper warmth and watering, we will have seedlings to plant in the garden by mid-March.

Where Are They Now?



*Above: Precious in carpentry
Right: Precious Thurman (today)*

Precious Haynes as a young student was a participant in each program activity provided. She thrived as she progressed. About herself, she wrote:

Although I felt my purpose in life was to be a corporate lawyer, I am in my fifth year of teaching high school-level and college-level English in which I serve as the Co-Chair of the English Department, Cheer Coach, and Senior Sponsor. I love my students and love making a positive impact in their lives in the same way my life was impacted when attending Durocher House. I am working towards becoming a National Board Certified Teacher and I am pursuing a Specialist degree in Educational Leadership with plans of becoming a high school principal. I reside in Jackson, MS with my husband and our two Huskies, Rocsi and Luna.



Resource Center

Taking advantage of the lull in use, the Resource Center building was upgraded with the rebuilding of the Girls' restroom which matches the previously rebuilt Boys' restroom.

Summer Class

Will we be able to have a 2021 summer school class? So much depends on vaccines and the total health environment as well as public schools' plans. There is no doubt that capable young adults from Jonestown will offer themselves as teachers for a session, different from originally planned, but of value.

Piano!

Ms. Delores Fields Mason continues to contact her piano students by phone but, as is true in everything, personal teaching is not possible at this writing.



Shanaiya, practicing piano



Destiny and a new laptop

Thank You!

A plea in the last newsletter resulted in my being able to provide used and new laptops, a desktop, and a printer to over twenty students and adults. We are very grateful to everyone who quickly and generously responded. Others of you continue to provide gifts for scholarships and general educational needs. Thank you!

From here, daily prayers! May God bless you!

Sister Kay Burton

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