

Laurel Area Faith in Action

Annual Report

Executive Summary

Our Vision

Through the efforts of a dedicated team of professional staff and trained volunteers, Laurel Area Faith in Action is recognized as the organization that provides the opportunity for older adults to continue to live in their homes with an overall sense of well-being.

It is an everyday struggle for elderly people to remain independent in their own homes. It is not only an effort but, in many cases, a physical impossibility to maintain a house, purchase groceries, household supplies, and clothing and get to essential doctor's appointments. Many elderly people do not have a family member, neighbor or friend who can help them with these common, everyday tasks. For many of these people it is not just a matter of quality of life issues involving isolation and loneliness, but also meeting basic survival needs.

The greater Laurel area is blessed with an abundance of people who are willing to do a "good deed" for a neighbor. Yet, prior to the formation of Laurel Area *Faith in Action*, there was no means to connect those willing to volunteer to the elderly who need the help. To address the unmet needs of this population, members of the Greater Latrobe Ministerial Association and twenty- nine Community Partners, founded the program with the help of a start up grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Eight years later, Laurel Area *Faith in Action* is now an independent 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation serving almost 300 care receivers.

The model brings members of the faith community together with others to address the needs of the aging population. The program has successfully built strong relationships with others in the area who serve the elderly population – churches, businesses, agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Faith in Action is in many ways an incubator that grows individual responsibility and initiative, kindness and philanthropy, community awareness and respect. This work helps to create a community that is a dynamic and expansive place where people want to live and raise families.

The program not only helps the elderly care receivers, but also changes the lives of the volunteers who care for them. It provides the opportunity for teens and adults to look beyond their own needs and experience the fulfillment from giving freely of oneself. For the elderly who are served, *Faith in Action* offers vital assistance in performing activities essential to living a life of independence and dignity.

Simply put, *Faith in Action* brings together caring people with those who are unable to accomplish those activities of daily living many of us take for granted, to the benefit of each person and the greater community.

***Such to me is the new image of aging: growth in self
and service for all mankind***

Ethel Percy Andrus

Board of Directors and Staff

Kim Payne, Rev. Clark Kerr, Marie McCandless, Louis Steiner, and Beth Floro.

Kathie Bartolomucci, Mary Jane Snyder, Pastor Karen Leedahl, and Bill Connolly.

Staff Mary Ann Aukerman and Sibby McLaughlin with Jane Kerr, Executive Director (seated).

Kathie Bartolomucci with Volunteer Trainer Karen Sweeney Ryall

Office staff Fran Gigliotti and Doris Loncharich with office volunteer Lois Odendahl.

Board of Directors and Staff

The Executive Director directs the day to day operations with the support of part-time staff provided through the senior Employment Program at WCCC; a part-time training consultant, and a part time accounting position. A talented and focused Board of Directors of up to fifteen members meets on a monthly basis to help oversee and participate in strategic planning and implementation. An additional Advisory Board of up to five offers expertise and support to the program management.

Local Community leader Phil Dymond conducted a series of Board development workshops, bringing the Board together for strategic planning in the fall of 2008.

Officers 2008-2010

President

Linda Hammers, Sales Manager, Baltimore Life Companies

Vice President

Marie McCandless, News Editor, Latrobe Bulletin

Secretary

Courtney Baum, Director, Career Services, Saint Vincent College

Treasurer

Louis Steiner, Retired, Latrobe Foundry

Board of Directors 2008

Kathy Bartolomucci, Aging Care Supervisor III, Area Agency on Aging

William Connolly, Program Coordinator, Westmoreland Community Action

Beth Floro, Assistant Director, Grantseeking, Saint Vincent College

Rev. Clark R. Kerr, Pastor, Latrobe Presbyterian Church

Rev. Karen Leedahl, Pastor, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

Kimberly Payne, Assistant to Rector, St. Michael's of the Valley Church

Mary Jane Snyder, CPA, Retired, U.S. Department of State

Harry Speedy, M.D., Physician, Retired, Diagnostic Associates

Advisory Board (new in 2009):

Alan Hipps, Guidance Counselor, Greater Latrobe School District

John Graziano, President, Hartman-Graziano Funeral Home

Frank Lucente, Professor, Westmoreland County Community College

Staff – 2008

Jane F. Kerr, Executive Director

Sibby McLaughlin, SEP, WCCC; **Mary Ann Aukerman**, SEP, WCCC

Doris Loncharich; **Karen Sweeney-Ryall**, Trainer; **Jayne Kalp**, Accounting

Retiring Board Members 2009

Fr. Athanasius Cherry, Saint Vincent, Professor, Nurse Practitioner

Mickey Radman, Beth Israel Congregation

Community Partners

Adelphoi USA
Bradenville United Methodist Church
Beth Israel Congregation
Christ United Church of Christ
Excelsa Health Latrobe Hospital
Greater Latrobe School District
Green Meadows Assisted Living
Heritage United Methodist Church
Holy Family Church
Holy Trinity Parish/Ligonier
LAH Charitable Foundation
Latrobe Alliance Church
Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce
Latrobe Bulletin
Latrobe Church of God
Latrobe Presbyterian Church
Latrobe Salvation Army
Latrobe United Presbyterian Church
Laurel Area Partnership on Aging
Mental Health Association in Westmoreland County
Pleasant Unity United Methodist Church
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
Rotary Club of Latrobe
Senior Employment Program at WCCC
St. Benedict Catholic Church
St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church
St. John the Evangelist Church
St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church
St. Michael's of the Valley Episcopal Church
St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Saint Vincent Basilica Parish
Saint Vincent College
Saint Vincent Seminary
Tree of Life/Assembly of God Church
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
United Way of Westmoreland County
Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging
Westmoreland County Community College
Westmoreland Community Action

Proud agency since 2005



United Way
of Westmoreland County

Summary of Program Accomplishments

The Laurel Area *Faith in Action* program completed seven full years of operation in January 2009. We are proud of many accomplishments, including the following highlights of 2008:

Significant changes were made to **increase agency capacity**, including the following:

- A new bereavement support service was developed and the first team of volunteers was recruited and trained in April 2008. They provide home and/or facility-based bereavement support for those unable to attend support group meetings.
- The program maintained steady **growth** in 2008, registering an average almost 2 new care receivers **per week** and 1+ volunteers **per week**. Volunteers reported almost 6,000 hours of service. The Program helped **297 care receivers** remain in their homes with dignity, quality of life, and an overall sense of well being.
- Working with a talented young college graduate, a DVD was created where program recipients were interviewed and asked to discuss their volunteers and what the program has meant to their lives. The DVD was presented to the volunteers at the annual Volunteer Recognition dinner held at Saint Vincent Grove in September 2008.

The founding Director and many founding Board members, along with many of the original service volunteers remain active in the program. This **retention** and strong sense of mission, along with collaboration and solid support from many congregations and other community partners, has enabled the program to thrive and grow.

The most significant “mission accomplished” in 2008 was the help many elderly couples and individuals received enabling them to remain in their own homes with dignity, quality of life, and an overall sense of well being. Their lives were enhanced with friendly visits and calls, rides and errands, a changed light bulb, a sidewalk shoveled, a bill paid. And, they had the peace of mind knowing friends were there to help when they needed it. It is an honor to be part of the team making a difference in the greater Laurel community.

Excerpt from the letter from the daughter of a Care Receiver with Alzheimer’s:

...You can only imagine my relief to discover Faith in Action. For an entire year, a volunteer has faithfully transported my mother. She has a familiar, friendly face that she can trust will be there to talk, laugh, and put an arm around her in slippery weather. This may seem like such a small thing to some, but I assure you it is not for my ailing mother who courageously clings to her dignity and personal care as well as her mind will permit...

Excerpt from a Volunteer’s e-mail upon learning of the death of his Care Recipient:

“Perhaps the best thing I have learned from this experience is the way in which he (recipient) enriched my life. I learned a great deal about him in the course of our visits together and while he was neither a great saint nor a devout sinner (like most of us), he was a unique human in his own God given way. His story is now part of my story. Thank you for the opportunity.”

“If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it.”

Sent with a thank you card from a Care Recipient

Community Collaboration Partnerships – New and Expanded

- **Adelphoi Village** – The collaboration with group homes at Adelphoi Village has been a tremendous success and the relationship continues to grow. The work with Adelphoi group homes began in the summer of 2003, after struggling to help many elderly residents who needed grass cut and leaves raked. Following the summer grass cutting success, almost fifty boys helped to rake truckloads of leaves. The following winter, snow shoveling services were added to the list. *Today, many care receivers are able to remain in their homes because the youth and supervisors at Adelphoi Village are willing to help.* And, the opportunity to help will leave a lasting impression on the young teens as well. *It is estimated that over 400 different youth have helped over the past few years.*
- **Saint Vincent College (SVC)** – Interns have worked with the program for several years, helping with special projects, administration, and visiting care receivers. In the summer of 2008, two interns visited with elderly care recipients, recording oral histories. Several ladies who worked as “Rosie the Riveters” in local industry during WWII and others who are first generation Americans spent many hours sharing memories of an important part of our local history. Interns are paid through Saint Vincent College and PHEAA funds. Volunteers from SVC’s new **Service Learning** initiative provided a variety of much needed home services in 2008, including teams of incoming freshman on August 24 and over 40 members of the Soccer and Lacrosse teams raked leaves in November.
- **Saint Vincent Seminary** - Two Seminary students were enrolled in an ongoing practicum program with Laurel Faith in Action where they earn credit and gain field pastoral experience. The students, originally from South America and Viet Nam, visited elderly gentlemen who had traveled extensively in their professional lives. The visits were stimulating for the care recipients and meaningful for the students.
- **Bereavement Support** – In response to the need for local bereavement support for the home-bound, frail elderly, the program worked in collaboration with professionals from Excelsa Health, Heartland Hospice, and other related organizations to develop a comprehensive training program for bereavement support teams. A small team of bereavement support friendly visitors was recruited and trained in April 2008.
- **United Way of Westmoreland County** –The program has worked with the United Way since 2002, earning agency status in 2005 and an additional three year award period commencing July 2008. Based on the Laurel Faith in Action model and program documentation, the United Way has expanded the initiative to four other communities in Westmoreland County. The United Way Day of Caring is an annual event and two in-home projects were completed in 2008.
- **Westmoreland County Community College** – An intern whose career interest is non-profit management of human services organizations worked with the program in the fall of 2008, documenting all internal procedures to develop an office procedures manual. She also audited and consolidated all participant applications and documents for filing.

“It’s the ‘unity’ in Community that gets the job done.”

Public Relations

Public relations and marketing strategies are vital to local community outreach programs like the Laurel Area Faith in Action Program. Working with several local sources, the program has maintained a high profile in the local market.

Latrobe Bulletin – The publisher of the paper has been a Community Partner from the start of the program, sponsoring an award for the annual Awards Luncheon and publishing countless articles about Faith in Action. The News Editor covers all program events and currently serves as Vice President of the Board of Directors.

Laurel Mt. Post – Based a grant to provide free advertising for local non-profit organizations, the editors of this exciting new local magazine have included articles, photographs, and display ads in their bi-monthly publication.

CommUnity News – The quarterly publication of the Unity Township news magazine includes articles submitted by the Executive Director of the program.

Tribune Review – An interesting article about the oral histories project with Saint Vincent College interns appeared in the summer of 2008. From this article, one of the elderly program recipients who was interviewed was reunited with a friend from forty years ago. The woman had lost track of her friend and when she read the article, she recognized the woman and her story and called the Tribune reporter who referred her to the Faith in Action program and ultimately her long lost friend.

Other local publications and church newsletters publish program announcements throughout the year.



Public Relations

Oral History Excerpt from a “Rosie the Riveter”

I was born on November the 11th 1918, the day the peace armistice was signed ending WWI. Then only a little over twenty years later the Second World War would be underway. I lived in west Derry with my husband and my parents. When Pearl Harbor was attacked I already had three children. My oldest daughter was born two weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor, she was born November 24th. Even though I came from a big family only my husband fought in the war. He was in the Navy. He went into the Navy on his 25th birthday in 1944 and came out Christmas morning of 1945. For me, the only work I did before the war was daytime work for a druggist in Derry.

But then in 1944 I went to work at Acme Die which was in Mechesneytown, I was 25 when I went to work there. At Acme Die we made the fuses for the bombs, but we were never told a lot about what we were doing, you simply just did your job. There were glass shields and you worked around them, and we had two kinds of powder that we put in tubes. The one powder was yellow, and I know that because I had to carry the powder. But no matter what, you had to keep everything clean, because if not the powder would build up and then explode. The explosion wouldn't kill you or anything, but it was enough to hurt you. I worked midnight shift a couple of times, around six o'clock in the morning I'd start to get sleepy. The other hours were from twelve to eight and then four to twelve, but the couple of hours before quitting you'd get really sleepy and then you'd hear a bang here and then a bang there and then everybody was awake...

Program Care Recipient, July 2008

PIX

Youth from Chicago, Illinois participating In the Catholic Heart Work Camp in June 2008 spent four full days at the home of husband and wife care receivers pictured below with the workers.

NEW SERVICE OFFERED IN 2008

PIX

Bereavement support team at first training in May 2008.

**COMMUNITY
COLLABORATION**

Catholic HEART Workcamp
(*HEART – Helping Everyone Attain Repairs Today*) For the second consecutive year, youth and adults from across the United States came to Westmoreland County in late June 2008 as part of the Catholic Diocese annual mission work camp program. **Sixteen** care recipient homes received help with painting and home repairs. The teams (7-8 kids and 1-2 adults per team) scraped, caulked windows, primed, painted, repaired a crumbling concrete wall, built new porch steps, refinished a deck, removed wallpaper and painted a kitchen, and removed shrubbery and planted new landscaping. Many materials were donated and all the labor for four full days was offered as well. **Over one hundred youth and adults** made a real difference for the program care receivers.

**BACK IN 2008 BY POPULAR
DEMAND!**

PIX

Office Staff and Volunteers display Advent “tins” from the annual Advent project.

The tins featured 5 inspirational stories and 5 gifts –one for each Sunday in Advent and the final for Christmas. 450 tins were wrapped, assembled, and delivered to 300+ care recipients and the remainder were sold to be given as gifts. The Advent project helps many elderly in the Laurel Area enjoy the Advent season. It is also an effective (and fun) fund raising project for the Laurel Faith in Action Program.

Events

- The *Annual Awards Luncheon* – This was a great success with 122 attending the fifth annual Awards event held May 30 at Denunzio’s Chophouse at the Arnold Palmer Regional airport. Three awards were given including the following: Founders Award presented to The United Way of Westmoreland County; Partners in Faith award given to St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church; and Civic Award awarded to Unity Township Board of Supervisors. Guest speaker for the event was Bishop Kurt F. Kusserow, newly elected Bishop for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and former pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church.
- *Volunteer Appreciation Dinner* – The seventh annual dinner was well attended by more than 120 volunteers and Board members at St. Vincent Grove on September 25, 2008. Entertainment was provided by Laurie B. Jones, MMT, MT-BC, LPC; Assistant Professor of Music Therapy, Seton Hill University. She brought more than 30 drums of different shapes and sizes and the volunteers participated in “music therapy”. A special surprise and “gift” was given to the volunteers – a DVD produced over the summer where recipients were interviewed talking about the program and what it means to them. The DVD was produced by Zach Simons, son of Jim Simons, Rector, St. Michaels of the Valley Church.
- *Leaf Raking* – On November 15, over 200 youth and adults from 19 groups in Latrobe, Unity Township, and Ligonier and students from Saint Vincent College raked at 31 care receiver homes, filling several trucks and hundreds of bags!

PIX

Leaf Raking for over 200 youth in November 2008 was not just work! work! work!

Program Activity – 2008

Volunteers*	55 new	168 active*	<i>Since 2002</i> 392 total trained
Care receivers	96 new	297 served	512 total registered

Volunteer Hours

	Hours		
2008 Total	5902	Program Totals:	27,942
<i>Top hours reported:</i>			
Friendly Visiting	1,751		8,877
Transportation	1,237		5,198
Errands	809		2,887
Yard work**	1,001		4,466

**Does not include additional average of 75 youth from Adelphoi Village per year.*

*** Includes lawn mowing, leaf raking, and snow shoveling.*

Program Costs – 2008

Costs to provide program services are small. In 2008, \$250 in administrative costs provided rides, errands, visits, chores, calls, and much more for one recipient **for an entire year**.

Based on the Financial Statement and IRS form 990 for 2008 and the reported Volunteer hours, an estimated average administrative cost for 2008 was \$11.20 **per volunteer hour**.

Based on this estimate and our Database Operations report, the program is able to estimate the following amounts for donors to consider when sending gifts:

Average administrative costs

Escorted ride to the doctor or grocery store	\$18.00
Errand for groceries	\$10.00
Friendly visit and assistance	\$16.50
One telephone reassurance call	\$ 3.50
Deliver Food bank to the home	\$ 7.50

Participant Demographics

Volunteers –

- 42% are aged 65 and above and 17% are aged 75 and above
- 68% of volunteers are women.
- The majority of volunteers have church affiliations.
- The most popular activities that volunteers choose are shopping, visits, and transportation.

<u>Age</u>	<u>%</u>
64 or younger	58
65-74	25
75-84	16
85-94	1

<u>Gender</u>	<u>%</u>
Female	68
Male	32

<u>Faith Tradition</u>	<u>%</u>
Local church affiliation	78
No listed affiliation	22

<u>Popular Activities</u>	<u>#</u>
Shopping	108
Visitor	107
Transportation	78

All percentages are based on total data reported and not on total count of volunteers; categories are not reported at 100%.

“Faith in Action has been such a blessing to me, in my quest for something meaningful to do with these “autumnal” years of life.” Program Volunteer

*“Laurel Area Faith in Action...
Changing lives, two at a time”*

Participant Demographics

Care Receivers –

- 58% are aged 80 and above and 11% are aged 90 and above.
- 79% of care receivers are women.
- 62% live alone and only 29% are married and living with their spouse.
- Only 22% list their health as “good”.
- Average Length of Stay in program is 29 months.
- The majority of care receivers list a faith community.
- 59% are referred to the program by word of mouth from friends, family, volunteers, and church; 30% are referred to the program from agencies and organizations.

<u>Age</u>	<u>%</u>
60-70	12
71-80	28
81-90	47
90-100+	11
<u>Gender</u>	<u>%</u>
Female	79
Male	21
<u>Living Arrangements</u>	<u>%</u>
Live Alone	62
Live with spouse or family	31
<u>Health condition</u>	<u>%</u>
Fair to Poor	78
Good	22

All percentages are based on total data reported and not on total count of volunteers; categories are not reported at 100%.

“When I went to bed last night I had a warm feeling all over and realized I was thinking about all the beautiful people from Faith in Action. The night before, I was awake worrying about how I would get all my work done. Big hugs to all of you!”

Program Recipient

***Laurel Area Faith in Action ...
Making a Difference in Many Lives***

New Projects and Initiatives for 2008

Expansion of Services – The future plans of the Laurel Area Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers *Faith in Action* program include continued growth in Latrobe, Ligonier, and Unity Township and expansion to additional communities in the “Laurel” area of Westmoreland County. Board members and the Executive Director met with members of the Derry Ministerial Association in late 2008 and are in ongoing discussions about expansion to this area.

Marketing Plan – Marketing and advertising consultants are helping management to develop and introduce several new marketing and fund raising strategies. Included in the plan are the following:

- **e-Memories** — the *Laurel Area Fund* – a new Memorial fund that includes development of a brochure that will raise awareness and increase ease of use for memorial designations and donations.
- **Membership for individuals**– targeted appeals for annual donations.
- **Partnership for businesses** – re-define current partnerships and seek new corporate and commercial support

Online credit card donations capability was planned for early 2009 and became operational in March 2009.

Community Foundation of Westmoreland County (CFWC) Laurel Faith in Action fund – The Board of Directors has approved establishment of an account with the CFWC that will help to raise awareness and credibility of the program and encourage larger donations.

Testing and implementation of effective program evaluation– Work continues with others in the industry to develop, test, revise, and document care receiver satisfaction and program outcomes. Meaningful key indicators have been identified and it is hoped that the value of the Laurel Area and other *Faith in Action* program services can be effectively quantified and qualified. As part of the ongoing interest in this area, several program participants were part of a focus group facilitated by the United Way of Westmoreland County in early 2009.

Laurel Area Fund ***The Local Charity of Choice***

***We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give.***

Winston Churchill