



**Volunteers
of America®**

PENNSYLVANIA

VOICE

Summer 2009



OPERATION BACKPACK 2009

Give back. Give pack.

Join **Operation Backpack** spokesperson **Paige Davis**, host of TLC's "Trading Spaces", and designer extraordinaire **Doug Wilson** in providing backpacks for children in need.

You Can Help Children Succeed In School

For most children, the beginning of the school year means new clothes, new shoes and a new backpack filled with fresh supplies. Yet for thousands of disadvantaged children in Pennsylvania, they begin the school year without the necessary items most of us take for granted.

To provide basic back-to-school supplies to disadvantaged children in the Keystone state, Volunteers of America of Pennsylvania has launched **Operation Backpack 2009**. The campaign will benefit children who are from low-income families, are living in foster care, or are living in shelters.

Operation Backpack is Volunteers of America's national back-to-school campaign that invites the public to purchase and donate new backpacks and school supplies for those children most in need. The new backpacks give the children a sense of confidence and hope, helping them feel like

continued on pg. 4

Celebrity Dinner Benefits Vital Human Services

"I could have listened to Joe all night... it was a fantastic event!"

Mayor Tom Leighton, shortly after Volunteers of America's 6th Annual Celebrity Dinner



Joe Theismann, former University of Notre Dame All-American and two-time Pro Bowl selection with the Washington Redskins, wowed the large, enthusiastic crowd at Volunteers of America's 6th Annual Celebrity Dinner held in Wilkes-Barre in May.

Joe Theismann inspired guests at the *Celebrity Dinner*.

entertaining and insightful as he shared stories of his playing days and explained why the good work of Volunteers of America merits support.

Theismann also hit a very personal note when he referred to his faith and firmly told the crowd "I am not a podium pounder, but I am a believer that **Jesus Christ** is my Savior."

"Joe's genuine compassion for those less fortunate truly resonated with the audience," said **Bill Jones**, vice president and chief operating officer of Volunteers of America of Pennsylvania.

In addition to the featured speaker, other highlights of the night included a successful silent auction and the presentation of Volunteers of America's **Spirit of Youth Award** to **Catherine D. Shafer**, president of **cds creative** and to **Bobby Soper**, president and CEO of **Mohegan Sun**.

"Volunteers of America serves the needy and very low income," the former NFL Most Valuable Player and Super Bowl Champ said. "Nothing is more important than serving those in need. That's what we are called to do."

continued on pg. 4

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From the President



Alan R. Garner

When Ballington and Maud Booth founded Volunteers of America in March 1896, a reporter asked them what the organization would be doing. Ballington responded, "We will go wherever we are needed and do whatever comes to hand."

That vision still rings true today. As the changing times we live in have created challenges in all of our lives, the work of Volunteers of America continues to meet the needs of people in communities across our Commonwealth and this great nation.

Thankfully, some things don't change. Please read about Jean Ramos on page 7. The Volunteers of America Children's Center in Allentown is a wonderful example of a program that has been serving children and families for about 100 years. The Children's Center serves approximately 150 children every day.

Jean needed help to support her family. She chose the Children's Center for childcare for her daughters because she was impressed with the quality of the program and the staff.

Today, in turn, Jean's granddaughter, Olivia, attends the Children's Center because Jean and her daughter want the same quality of care for Olivia — two generations at the Children's Center.

Talk to Dolores Swavely, director, and she can tell you of several families of two and even three generations who have attended the Children's Center because of the education, the curriculum, and the loving environment the staff provides.

The Foster Care program in Philadelphia is another example of where Volunteers of America is there to help the changing life of a child coming into foster care. Margaret Andrews, director of the foster care program, can give examples of children who, today, are young adults working toward success because of the stability of a good foster family.

The Volunteers of America Thrift Stores have been around for well over 100 years, providing some of life's basic needs. Every day our emergency services help people who, a day or two before, did not need our services.

Your generosity is the reason that the lives of so many families and individuals are restored to self-sufficiency, find meaning in their lives and a future with promise. While you will probably never meet the people you have helped, you will have the satisfaction of knowing you are a part of something greater.

Your unchanging support of this great work makes it all possible.

Thank You!

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Charitable gift lasts a lifetime

Your gift can give hope to many!

For **Paul F. Fulk** of Mechanicsburg, his greatest satisfaction comes from the positive results of his philanthropic investments. "Giving back is a part of life . . . I believe you get so much more than you give," he said.

A man of deep faith, Mr. Fulk believes all his earthly possessions are a gift from God. He smiled as he recalled his first contribution. "When I was around 10 or 12 years old, I joined the church. That is when I began my Sunday offerings. Well, I've been donating ever since!

"I have been blessed," he said, reflecting on his numerous charitable interests. "I've invested wisely which allows me to funnel it out to where it will do the most good. I'm using the Lord's money to make money, and then give it to important causes."

A member of the **Volunteers of America Legacy Society**, Mr. Fulk was impressed with our human services which impact the lives of more than 26,000 people each year.

"At first, I didn't know that Volunteers of America provided so many different services. I was very impressed." After reading about the breadth and depth of our programs, he decided to establish a charitable gift annuity.

If you, like Mr. Fulk, would like to help the many people served by Volunteers of America through your own legacy, please contact **Jim Ingolio**, director of mission advancement, at 717-236-14401 or e-mail jingolio@voapa.org. Jim can provide you and your advisors with information regarding:

- Charitable Gift Annuities
- Charitable Remainder Trusts
- Gift of real estate
- Bequests
- and other gift planning options



Paul Fulk, left, talks with Jim Ingolio about his charitable support for Volunteers of America.

Volunteers of America earns highest ratings

Charity Navigator, one of the largest and preeminent



evaluators of charities, has again renewed Volunteers of America as a "Four Star Charity." This is the most coveted rating it awards to nonprofit organizations.

You can feel good about the gifts you make to Volunteers of America because 88 cents of every dollar spent goes to support vital community services for people in need. We take our stewardship — and your generosity — seriously.

The Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance has also renewed



Volunteers of America's accreditation for maintaining the highest standards for nonprofit accountability.



Leave a legacy

rebuild lives and strengthen communities

How do you want to be remembered?

With thoughtful and careful charitable and estate planning, you can create a legacy of caring for future generations.

Please contact Jim Ingolio at Volunteers of America of Pennsylvania at 717-236-1440 for information on leaving a legacy.



give

help your community

all the “other kids” who are starting the school year with new supplies.

Operation Backpack is more than about giving paper, pens and crayons. The new backpacks will provide some sense of normalcy in these children’s lives—boosting their self-esteem and their grades.

For a list of needed school supplies, drop-off locations, and how you can get involved, visit www.voapa.org or call 717-236-1440 in Central PA, 412-782-5344 in Southwestern PA, 570-825-5261 in Northeastern PA, or 610-432-8352 in the Lehigh Valley.



Spirit of Youth Award Honorees, Catherine D. Shafer and Bobby Soper.

Award recipients are individuals whose support of the community and Volunteers of America embodies the spirit, enthusiasm and potential found in the hopefulness of a child.

Volunteers of America is most grateful for the support of those who attended as well as the major sponsors which included **McCarthy Tire Company, Mohegan Sun, Pennstar Bank, Sundance Vacations, Dr. Patrick Kerrigan, WBRE-TV, FOX-56 and Independent Graphics.** The Honorary Chairperson was **Tom Capone**, senior vice president and regional executive of Pennstar Bank.

Emergency Services Program meets urgent needs

Supporting the basic needs of men, women and children often goes beyond food and shelter. The guiding force of the **Volunteers of America Emergency Services Program** is to assist people in a crisis or an emergency and rebuild their lives. It is only because of the donations from individuals and organizations like **The Foundation for Enhancing Communities** that this program can serve those in need.

The program helps people in Central Pennsylvania who suffer the tragedies of house fires, floods or other disasters as well as others with critical needs and few resources. Some are transitioning from homelessness to more permanent housing.

“This grant is consistent with The Foundation’s commitment to strategically focus its resources on the highest critical needs in the region,” said **Rosemary Browne** for



Alan Garner, president of Volunteers of America of Pennsylvania, accepts a check from Rosemary Browne, director of programs and community investment for The Foundation for Enhancing Communities.

The Foundation for Enhancing Communities. “We are keenly aware of the impact of the economy on individuals and families, and that the basic needs so many of us take for granted such as food, shelter, clothing, and utilities are well beyond reach for many people, particularly the working poor.”

Through the generosity of Thrift Store donors, our organization provides clothing, blankets, cookware, towels, bed linens and other basic necessities at no cost to those in need.

This program serves individuals and families referred by churches, social service agencies and other community sources. To help ease the burden for people faced with

hardship, we identify what the person needs and issue a voucher to the referral source which can be redeemed at our Mechanicsburg or Harrisburg Thrift Stores.

Students learn dangers of drunk driving

The Volunteers of America of Pennsylvania **All of Us Care** program and the **Fox Chapel Area School District** recently welcomed the **Save-A-Life Tour** to Fox Chapel High School. This program, made possible by a \$5,000 grant from **The Child Health Association of Sewickley**, included a multimedia presentation along with a hands-on drunk driving simulator.

With an increasing number of students experimenting with alcohol and getting behind the wheel, the tour raised awareness about the menace of driving under the influence of alcohol or mind-altering substances. Eight hundred juniors and seniors at **Fox Chapel High School** were required to attend the 30-minute assembly. The students and the public were encouraged to apply their driving skills to the drunk driving simulator.

After using the simulator, students and adults completed a survey to determine if they understood the consequences of drunk driving. One of the most important lessons students learned is that it is everyone's responsibility to take the keys away from an intoxicated person wanting to drive, including mom or dad!



Students test their skills on the drunk driving simulator during the **Save-A-Life Tour** assembly.

Major League Baseball Players Trust Supports Computer Center



Greg Bouris, left, director of communications with the **Major League Baseball Players Association** and **Alan Garner**, right, president of Volunteers of America of Pennsylvania, look over the shoulders of students **Josh Bagnato** who was completing his homework and **Mike Benedict** who was accessing the **Pittsburgh Pirates** season schedule in **All of Us Care's** new Computer Center. The Computer Center was created, in part, from funds donated by the **Major League Baseball Players Trust**.

PNC Foundation gift empowers youth



PNC Bank Vice President of Community Development, **Mary Ellen Sullivan** (center), presented the Volunteers of America **All of Us Care** program with a \$15,000 check from the **PNC Foundation** to help fund the All of Us Care Computer Center. Ms. Sullivan enjoyed interacting with the children while Director, **Jan Barbus** (far right), observes. The program serves at-risk children and youth in the lower Allegheny Valley. Presently, 227 children are enrolled in the Computer Center activities.

DSF Charitable Foundation funds services in Pittsburgh

Recently, the **DSF Charitable Foundation** provided support in the amount of \$30,000 to Volunteers of America's **Working Order** and **All of Us Care** programs in Pittsburgh for technology upgrades. Working Order's assistance to individuals with disabilities and All of Us Care's after school and summer activities for at-risk children and youth are highly dependent on technology to deliver quality assistance.

"This generous grant from the DSF Charitable Foundation will make it possible for us to make needed upgrades to equipment and facilities which in turn benefits those we serve," said Pat Serey, chief development and marketing officer for Volunteers of America.

PADDC renews funding to support individuals with disabilities

The **Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council (PADDC)** has recently renewed its support of Volunteers of America's **Working Order** program through a second two-year project grant in the amount of \$120,000. The funded project is designed to develop a statewide network that creates, promotes and maintains opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to run their own businesses.

"Our shared vision is to encourage individuals with disabilities to explore the option of entrepreneurship as a viable alternative to traditional employment," states **Ruby Wilkosz**, regional director of Working Order.

Volunteers of America's staff is collaborating with community leaders, disability provider organizations, chambers of commerce, United Ways, government agencies, and corporations, as well as other persons and entities across the Commonwealth, to educate and engage people in how to connect potential entrepreneurs to resources that will help them be successful.

Included in the project is the development of a website and statewide directory of people and entities that are working to support self-employment. This directory will make it easy for anyone wanting to be an entrepreneur to be able to access available resources.

Volunteers of America's partnership with PADDC to develop this network and directory is a major step forward in assisting those who experience obstacles to traditional employment. It is a natural extension of the work carried out by Working Order, a business incubator focused on helping disadvantaged individuals as well as people with disabilities become entrepreneurs.

"We are continually working to identify more people and organizations that are striving to accomplish similar goals," explained Wilkosz. If you or your organization would like to be included in the directory, email a brief explanation of your work and contact details to workingorder@voapa.org.

Your Thrift Store donations rebuild lives

Okay, so you didn't get around to spring cleaning. Well, summer is a great time to gather your unused items to donate to the Volunteers of America **Thrift Store**.

Our Thrift Stores not only offer affordable clothing and household items, they are an integral part of helping those faced with hardships caused by fire, domestic violence, serious illness or other crisis. Hundreds of clothing and furniture vouchers are distributed each year to people affected by these situations.

Our stores are completely supported by donations from the community. The sale of each item benefits vital programs such as emergency services, affordable housing, programs that help the disabled live independently, youth mentoring, and early child education.

Volunteers of America has Thrift Stores in Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg and Wilkes-Barre. Drop off your donations at the store nearest you. Your gift may be tax deductible.

To schedule a free home pick-up:

- in Central PA, call (717) 766-2999
- in Northeastern PA, call (570) 829-5100

Recently, **Pride Mobility** in Exeter, **Wegmans** in Wilkes-Barre and **Art Communications Systems (ACS)** in Harrisburg held clothing drives to benefit Volunteers of America.



***Park L. Cook**, president and CEO of ACS, and **Lauren Jacobs**, sales and marketing coordinator, motivated the employees to donate more than 2,000 items of clothing and accessories.*

Baby Pantry receives support from CVS Caremark



CVS Caremark in Wilkes-Barre recently donated a generous supply of baby care items and funds to support Volunteers of America's **Caring Alternatives Pantry**. **Bill Jones**, vice president/chief operating officer of Volunteers of America, accepted the donation from **Karen Evans**, materials manager and campaign coordinator, and **Rose Lang**, vice president/general manager, **CVS Caremark**.

The pantry supports women who are or think they may be pregnant and families with infant children under the age of 12 months. Volunteers of America has operated the pantry for nearly a decade and provides diapers, formula, baby food, hygiene items, clothing and other resources to families in need.

If you, your church, club, or company wish to support the pantry, please call Bill at 570-825-5261.

Children's Center provides safe, nurturing childcare

Serving Allentown for nearly 100 years

Grateful does not begin to describe how **Jean Ramos** feels about the **Volunteers of America Children's Center**. For her two daughters, now adults, and her three grandchildren, the Children's Center has played a key role in their growth and development.

She needed to get a job to help support her family. She began looking for a day care for her eldest daughter **Tanya** and checked out programs in the Allentown area. Although she had a number of choices, she chose the Children's Center. She was most impressed with the staff's dedication, the nutritious meals, and the safe, nurturing environment.

Jean based her decision on the Center's Director, **Dolores Swavely**. "Dolores and her staff are so kind and understanding. She has a lot of compassion for the children and their families. If you have a problem, she is there to help."

Jean went on to say, "The children's safety and security are

"My granddaughter thoroughly enjoys the full day of activities," Jean added. "She's made many new friends and loves her teachers. The Children's Center has taught her to share and be a good listener. She's grown in many ways."

also important. In today's world, that is very reassuring."

Jean points out that many of the teachers who taught her daughters are still present, guiding the children to achieve their full potential. Two-year-old **Olivia**, Jean's youngest grandchild, now attends the Children's Center.

Olivia's mom and grandmother are active in her life and enjoy helping the teachers in the classroom. "It has been a joy to watch Olivia grow and develop in my classroom," her teacher added. "It's nice to have family members who are so involved and want the best environment for their child to grow and develop."



Thanks to a grant from **Kraft Cares (Kraft Foods Foundation)**, students at the **Volunteers of America Children's Center** learn yoga to encourage regular physical exercise.



Youngsters at the **Volunteers of America Children's Center** enjoy new books contributed through the **Barnes & Noble** store at the **Lehigh Valley Mall**. **Barnes & Noble's** customers shared the gift of literacy by donating more than 2,000 new books for the children.

Special thanks to scholarship donors!

The **Volunteers of America Children's Center** is grateful to receive **Educational Improvement Tax Credit** contributions from the following companies in the 2008/2009 tax year. Their support enables us to provide scholarship assistance for pre-kindergarten children whose families are in financial need.

Capital Blue Cross

Keystone National Bank & Trust

PNC Financial Services Group

Sovereign Bank

Susquehanna Bank

United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley

Please remember Volunteers of America in your will.

Our programs in Pennsylvania

Children, Youth & Families Programs

The Children's Center – Allentown 610-432-8352
Affordable childcare for children 13 months to 10 years old. Playgrounds for toddlers, pre-school and school-age children.

Foster Care – Philadelphia 215-930-0129
Foster and kinship homes provided for abused and neglected children from birth to age 18.

All of Us Care – Pittsburgh 412-782-6855
Program to prevent crime and substance abuse among children and youth ages 5-19.

Caring Alternatives – Wilkes-Barre 570-825-5261
Crisis pregnancy counseling, education and support services provided as an alternative to abortion.

Hartman Home – Wilkes-Barre 570-825-5261
Serves females ages 14-17 who have been severely traumatized through abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

Community Enhancement Services

Books-to-You! – Statewide
In partnership with Scholastic, Inc., children's books are distributed free each year to underprivileged children.

Operation Backpack – Statewide 717-236-1440
New backpacks and school supplies are provided to underserved children to give them a jump start for a successful school year.

Emergency Services – Central PA 717-766-2999
Based on referrals from churches and social service agencies, program provides free clothing and furniture to individuals and families in emergency situations.

Toy Drive – Central PA 717-236-1440
Toys donated from businesses, organizations and individuals are given to underserved children at Christmas.

PA Workwear Program – Luzerne Co. 570-829-5100
Work appropriate clothing is provided to help individuals transitioning back into the workforce.

Thrift Stores

Clothing, furniture, appliances and household goods at traditional thrift store prices. Community encouraged to shop, donate items and volunteer. Proceeds provide financial support for our programs.

Harrisburg – 2550 Paxton St., 717-558-0400

Mechanicsburg – 675 Silver Spring Rd., 717-766-2999

Wilkes-Barre – 400 S. Main St., 570-829-5100

Elderly and Disabilities Programs

Working Order – Pittsburgh 412-782-5344
Supports entrepreneurship for individuals with disabilities and others seeking to be self-employed.

Dial-A-Driver – Wilkes-Barre and Wyoming Valley 570-825-5261

Specially equipped shuttle vans provide transportation for elderly citizens and people with disabilities to get to medical appointments, grocery shopping and other quality-of-life destinations.

Affordable Housing

For individuals and families living on limited incomes.

Family Apartments

Allentown – Family Apartments 610-432-8352
Apartments for low-income families.

Wilkes-Barre – Garrahan Street Residence 570-829-6542
For young adults ages 18-25 with limited incomes and who may be at risk for homelessness.

Elderly Apartments

For the elderly living on fixed incomes.

Harrisburg - Laurel Towers 717-233-1340
Wilkes-Barre – The Palmer House 570-829-6542

Special Needs

Independent living for adults with mental health issues designed to foster independence.

Harrisburg – New Song Village 717-561-7270
Harrisburg – Third Street Apartments 717-236-1440
Wilkes-Barre – PlainsView Apartments 570-829-6542

Homeless Services

Manna House Apartments – Wilkes-Barre 570-825-0542
Transitional living program that serves homeless adults ages 18-25 to achieve independence and housing permanency.

Mental Health Services

Supported Living Program – Harrisburg 717-236-1440
Serving adults with severe mental illness in Dauphin County to promote recovery and improve or maintain independent living skills.