



Churches Serving Those in Need

THE BEACON BULLETIN

VOLUME II, NUMBER 1 – JANUARY, 2016

Beacon is About Breaking the Chains of Poverty

The mission of Beacon is to transform lives and communities in response to Jesus' call to serve "the least of these among us."

Our service area: Belleville, Shiloh, Swansea,
O'Fallon, Fairview Heights, Caseyville

Coming Events

Beacon Virtual Run/Walk

Work off those extra pounds and improve your health!
Walk or run 50 miles between February 1 and March 30, 2015
You can walk or run anywhere, anytime.
Receive a cool medal at the end.
All of the \$30 fee goes to help the people Beacon serves.
Go to VirtualRun/Walk/Hike.com to sign up.

Quarterly Interagency Networking Forum

January 21, 2016, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.
Holy Trinity Catholic Church
505 Fountains Parkway
Fairview Heights, IL 62208
Pastor Cory Hartz, Trinity UCC, Speaker
Refreshments and drinks will be served.
Here is your opportunity to share information and gain insights.
Special Topic: Needs and Services for Homeless People

Super Bowl Sunday White Chili

Dragon's Breath (Mild) -- Dragon's Fire (Hot)
St George Episcopal Church, 410 N. High Street, Belleville
Sunday, February 7, 2016
Pick-up between 12 noon and 3 p.m.
All proceeds go to support Beacon Ministry
\$9.00 per quart if paid in advance, \$10.00 at the door
Pay in advance: Mail to St. George's Episcopal Church
105 East "D" Street, Belleville, IL 62220

Trivia Night

April 9, 2016

St. Augustine's Church
1910 West Belle
Belleville, IL 62226

Doors open @ 6:15 p.m. • Game starts @ 7:00 p.m.

\$12 per person • \$2 Discount per Person for Tables of 8 or 10

Reserve a table for your Team of 8 or 10

By calling (618) 222-8942 & ask for Carol

Give name of your Team and Players and get a Table number.

There will also be plenty of room for “walk-ins”.

B.Y.O.S. (Bring Your Own Snacks)

Beer ◦ Wine ◦ Soda ◦ Water can be purchased

Beacon Furniture Ministry Deliveries and Pickups

Saturdays, January 9 (CANCELED DUE TO BAD WEATHER) and 16, 8:30 a.m. – noon

Beacon Furniture Warehouse

10th and A Streets, Belleville, IL

Looking for a blessing? Show up to help!

If you have furniture items to donate, call us at 222-8942 to get on our pickup schedule.

Relational Lunch and Faith Forums

Wednesdays, January 13 and 27, 2016, 1:30 p.m.

Trinity United Church of Christ

48 N. Douglas Ave, Belleville

You are welcome! Come share lunch and conversation about faith and life.

The Virtual Run/Walk

Beacon Board member Debra Townsend introduces us to a wonderful opportunity to contribute to Beacon Ministry and get in shape all at the same time. It is the Virtual Run/Walk, a perfect way to stay fit through the winter months, when, if we don't go to a fitness center, we tend to lead sloth-like existences, getting soft and flabby while we wait for Spring. With the Virtual Run/Walk you can change all that, and feel great and help Beacon at the same time. Every penny of everyone's \$30 fee goes directly to help the poor and homeless people Beacon serves. Just go to the website, www.virtualrun/walk/hike.com to learn more

and to sign up. For further information, you can visit www.beacon5K.com.

By the Numbers

During December 2015, 71 people made application for assistance at from Beacon. As is typical, that number is lower than other months. People seem not to call as readily during the holidays. Of those 71, 9 were asking for help with paying their rent. 37 called asking for furniture, and 17 sought help with paying utility bills. Beacon's Client Assistance Fund was exhausted during December but we were able to help those asking for assistance by helping them develop a catch-up plan, and connecting them to other agencies still having funds

available. With the new year, we are again able to provide some cash

There were 16 furniture deliveries and about a dozen pickups of donated furniture. The total number of furniture deliveries for 2015 was 144, far more than any previous year. That also means we received more donations, as well.

The Finance Coaching exceeded expectations, not so much in the numbers served, but the results obtained. The program began in March 2015. 27 people have been enrolled since it began. There were eleven enrolled at the beginning of December. Two graduated. A support group was formed in November, which has been attended by an average of five people at each weekly session. The two graduates are now attending the group and helping others on their way. We have seen 6 people gain employment as a result of the coaching. All 6 remain employed.

State Budget Failure Leaves Many in Crisis

Many programs formerly funded by the State of Illinois are floundering because of deep cuts to their income as the impasse between Republican Governor Rauner and Democratic House Speaker Michael Madigan drags on. We are now more than half way through the state fiscal year with no budget. This is not a partisan political issue. It is a HUMAN issue. We wrote previously in the Beacon Bulletin about day care centers closing, leaving hundreds of children without day care so their mothers can work and stay off of public assistance. Senior service agencies are also making deep cuts in their services due to lack of funding. Meals on Wheels and other feeding programs are being eliminated. These are real people suffering from the loss of these basic services. We wrote previously about cancellation of the PIP program that helped seniors on Social Security to pay their utility bills, who will now have to choose between food and medicine to keep lights and heat on.

Please help these kids and elderly people by contacting Governor Rauner and Speaker Madigan and tell them what is happening as a result of their failure to pass a budget, and to urge them to solve this problem quickly. Governor Rauner can be reached by going to his Web page. Go to Google and enter Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner. It will take you to his web page where you will see "State your opinion." Speaker Madigan's Springfield phone number is 217-782-5350. Thank you for caring.

Backpacks for the Homeless a Winter Blessing

Kyle Steward, our student intern from Eden Theological Seminary, distributed twenty backpacks over a period of a few days, beginning at Beacon's Relational Lunch and Faith Forum in November. Later, as he walked the streets of downtown Belleville, he encountered several more homeless people and gave them backpacks. The response was overwhelming, Kyle reports. People were obviously moved at the generosity these backpacks represented. Everyone who was offered a backpack received it joyfully. No one turned down the offer. Later, driving home, Kyle saw a young couple along the road holding a cardboard sign asking for help. He stopped and asked them what they needed. They said they were homeless and trying to get some food money. He told them he didn't have money, but he did have something for them – a backpack. They were overwhelmed. "We can't pay you," the woman said. "I don't take money. It's a gift. It's yours," Kyle said.

The backpack project continues. The coldest weather of this winter is still ahead. The first twenty backpacks were packed by members of Union United Methodist Church in Belleville. Other churches are joining in as well. Your church, or you personally, are invited to get on board and sponsor one or more backpacks. The backpacks contain winter clothing, a blanket, and toiletries. You can call Kyle to find out what items are needed and to find out how you can

participate. Kyle's phone number is 618-960-3086.

Beacon Participating in Extreme Weather Plan For Homeless People

Several Belleville Churches are serving as warming centers for homeless people during days when the high temperature doesn't exceed 20 degrees. There is one church, Trinity United Church of Christ, that is also serving as the site for obtaining hotel vouchers for night time. Catholic Urban Programs will pay for the hotel rooms using grant money from Belleville Township. St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department (IGD) is serving as the clearing house for tracking those who are attending church warming centers and obtaining hotel vouchers. IGD will also make

referrals of people to one of three agencies offering follow-up case management to those persons who choose to participate. The case management is to help the clients out of homelessness and into housing, as well as better managing their lives generally.

Funding for this will be handled by Beacon from a fund raised through pledges from people who attended the Persons of Character Dinner in Belleville in November. Beacon board member Rev. Rob Dyer made a plea to those in attendance at the dinner. We, along with St. Vincent de Paul and Project Compassion will be the service providers for the case management. Dan VandeRiet will be doing case management at Beacon. Some individuals may also receive financial coaching, which is provided by Pandora Harris.

This is interagency collaboration at its best.