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HTN NEWSLETTER

October 2021



A Message from the President

In this newsletter, you will have a chance to learn more about Mother of Mercy House, one of our newer ministries, as well as take a look back to the origins of HTN as we honor Dick Mohrbacher as the guiding light who first started the "furniture ministry" at St. Alphonsus.

We have had a very strong year, particularly as it relates to bed and furniture deliveries. Thanks to everyone involved in this ongoing project and for all the good works that get beds and furniture to the neediest of the needy.

Over the last few weeks, we have also had the privilege of working to help a family of Afghan refugees that are temporarily being housed in the St. Raymond rectory. This refugee initiative initially expected a small family, but plans changed, and they ended up with a family with nine children. HTN immediately rose to the occasion and became involved. We got beds to them within 48 hours of their request and will continue to work with them on beds, furniture, and more as they move into a new permanent home. While our ongoing projects are essential and important, it is rewarding to rise to the occasion in unique scenarios like this and help give these individuals the resources they need to thrive and rebuild their lives.

I wish you all a great start to the fall season and I hope to see many of our members over the weekend of Nov. 6th-7th when HTN will be speaking at each Mass. May God's blessings be with us in all we do.

Steve Finley

Save the Date: Social Sunday 🙏

HTN will be speaking at all Masses on **Saturday, Nov. 6th and Sunday, Nov. 7th**. HTN members will be available in the Narthex after each Mass to answer any questions.

We hope to see many of you there!



Bringing Mercy to the Streets

An interview with Fr. Liam Murphy of Mother of Mercy House

Tell me about the mission of [Mother of Mercy House](#) and how Mother of Mercy House was formed.

We say, most simply and concretely, that the mission of Mother of Mercy House is “to share the mercy of God with all.” Remembering that — at its root — mercy means “fierce, binding love,” our mission is to help everyone we encounter to experience God’s passionate, life-giving love for them.

Mother of Mercy House originated from an idea that was raised at the Convocation for Philadelphia Priests back in 2014. There it was noted that many parishes were closing in poorer neighborhoods and that there was a need to maintain the Church’s presence in those areas. The idea of a “storefront church” was mentioned and from there, Mother of Mercy House was born.

Fr. Joseph Devlin and I requested permission to initiate such a mission and

Sr. Ann Raymond, IHM on board and the three of us opened Mother and Mercy House on the corner of G and Allegheny Avenue in a one-time closed bar.

We started with daily Mass, neighborhood walks, and rosaries in the parks. Soon, a food bank was added and from those humble beginnings Mother of Mercy House has become what it now is.

Today, we celebrate Mass three days a week, have a Spanish prayer group, and offer prayer nights and other opportunities for neighbors to come into our chapel and spend time with the Lord. We also take daily walks through the neighborhood to simply talk with folks and offer a prayer and a blessing.

At our site, we now offer many services including:

- Weekly grocery distribution
- Regular distribution of sandwiches and snack bags to those experiencing homelessness and addiction
- “Second Saturday” is an opportunity for volunteers to provide a meal to our neighbors and the homeless; usually about 100 people are served each Second Saturday.
- Diaper and clothing distribution programs
- Parenting classes
- ID program
- After school program for our neighborhood kids
- “Story and Snack Tuesday” where children come to read/hear Bible stories, learn to pray, and enjoy a snack

What’s the biggest challenge that Mother of Mercy House is up against right now?

I feel our biggest obstacle is making sure our neighbors know that we — even with COVID still looming in the background — are still here, open and ready to serve.

What inspires you in your work?

What inspires our staff in our work is the amazing generosity of those who help us and volunteer with us. Their kindness, generosity, and energy inspire us to keep doing what we do.

Christ and respond with compassion and love, even when we know we cannot “fix” every situation.

How long have HTN/St. Alphonsus and Mother of Mercy House been working together? And how did you first hear about HTN?

We have been working with HTN for a few years now. Our relationship began when Fr. Murphy preached at St. Alphonsus Parish about our ministry and then met members of the HTM team who were eager to establish a connection. Alex Rodriguez and Diane Hoffman — two incredible members of our Mother of Mercy staff — work very closely with HTN.

How does HTN help Mother of Mercy House?

HTN has supported us by providing beds, bedding, and other home furnishings for several of our ministry’s needy families. They have also helped us financially and it has been a wonderful partnership.

What makes HTN unique compared to other organizations/ministries you work with?

Our relationship with HTN is special in that HTN provides us with services we could not get elsewhere. It can feel overwhelming when we discover families who do not even have beds for their children. Knowing that we can specifically turn to HTN for assistance is a great blessing to us and a relief to our families in need.

Is there anything else you’d like people to know about this partnership or Mother of Mercy House?

It is good for people to know that Mother of Mercy House is completely self-sufficient. We are completely dependent on donations to stay open and fulfill our mission, so having a group like HTN that we can turn to is a great help to us. We are so grateful for the partnership and dedication of HTN and its members!

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More information coming soon about how you can participate in this year's
HTN's Project Santa!



HTN Remembers Dick Mohrbacher

Remarks from Dave White with information from Tom Moore's interview with Dick in April 2020.

This year HTN is dedicating our efforts to the memory of Dick Mohrbacher. Dick passed away this June in California. It was Dick that got Tom Moore involved in his one-man ministry that began in 1995 to collect and deliver furniture to the needy of Our Lady of Hope with the support of St. Alphonsus parishoners Mary Jane Flood, Dan Lynch and Dave Dunn.

Dick had taken out the seats in his van and replaced them with a sheet of plywood so he could fit more furniture in it. That is how committed he was to help those around him. Dick also began a scholarship program in 1998 through 2018. Within his own family, Dick had 4 biological children as well as foster children.

Under Tom Moore and Steve Finley's leadership, HTN has continued and expanded Dick's furniture ministry. Last year, even despite the many challenges brought on by the pandemic, HTN made our planned furniture pickup and deliveries to the needy. At Christmas time, our Project Santa program delivered over 1,000 gifts to children in Kensington and Tony Romano enlisted Foreman Mills to become a Project Santa partner.

This spring, HTN delivered furniture to 38 families referred to us by the staff at

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serves. Working with our partner One House at a Time (OHAAT), we provided 17 beds to needy children. As I write this article, HTN is in the middle of its fall furniture pickup and delivery schedule — with the concerns of the pandemic still prevalent — our Project Santa team is finalizing plans to deliver Christmas toys this holiday season.



Dick Mohrbacher has gone home to God, but his earthly ministry to the poor still goes on. By now you will have received our 2021 Annual Fundraising letter. I hope you will consider responding with a donation. The letter includes a self-addressed envelope you can use to send your gift. HTN is a 100% volunteer-based organization. Every dollar you donate funds our operations.

Our patroness St. Mother Teresa gave her entire life to helping the poor and the sick, and we thank you all for everything that you have done to support our needy brothers and sisters.



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