



GET *to* GIVE

Quarterly Newsletter of Lower Lights Ministries

Autumn 2008

It's the Great Pumpkin, Franklinton!

In October, Lower Lights Ministries hosted the 4th Annual Pumpkin Patch Party, giving Franklinton children the opportunity to enjoy a morning packed with fun for themselves and their parents. As in years past, Tom and Cookie Stivison, longtime supporters and owners of **Columbus Equipment Company** teamed with students from Grove City Christian Academy and Southeast Church of the Nazarene (Tallmadge, Ohio) to present our own "Fall Classic." Andi Hansen coordinated and orchestrated the event, making it our best yet.

Despite the morning chill, by mid-morning one could hear the cheers of excited children, smell firewood as marshmallows were roasted, and see a flurry of fun as kids enjoyed games, crafts and face-painting. A poor pumpkin harvest this year threatened the event, but Mr. and Mrs. Stivison arrived just in time with a truck full of pumpkins for each child to decorate. Even the parents got into the action, enjoying an occasional handful of popcorn, and even reliving their youth playing with our gigantic parachute. You could even see a parent or two sneaking into the cake walk hoping to win a harvest cupcake. As things began to wind down, everyone gathered around and many of the kids won neat prizes and gift cards to *Toys R Us* and *McDonalds*, with everyone taking home a goody bag.

All of the participants were invited to stay for lunch, crowding into the church basement for a hot meal before heading home. Milly Hennen and Tammy Daniels prepared enough lunch to feed a small army, and the kids polished off most of it with little effort.

By mid-afternoon, other than the opportunistic bird hunting fallen popcorn crumbs and some worn out volunteers, there was little evidence of the event. But what will always endure is each child's memory that the empty lot next to the church was transformed into an exciting pumpkin patch just for them.



HOLIDAY OUTREACH

As in years past, Lower Lights Ministries will provide Thanksgiving and Christmas meal boxes for low-income Franklinton families. These boxes include everything the family needs to have a great holiday meal, and are needed more than ever this year as the economy continues to struggle. To meet the increased need, this year our ministry will provide 140 holiday baskets.

If you would like to sponsor a family meal box or boxes, please send \$25 per box sponsorship and mark your gift "Holiday Meals." For your added convenience, you can make your gift on our secure website and indicate your designation in the comments section of the online donation module.

We also accept food items to defer the costs of the meal baskets. For more information on how you and your group can be involved, contact Lori Rhein at the Lower Lights office.



Volunteers from Highpoint Nazarene Church serve annually in the distribution of holiday meals.

Rachel's House Cards Available for the Holidays



Just in time for the holidays, Rachel's House is making available the first of a series of blank greeting cards for purchase. Artwork for these cards was created by women currently incarcerated at the *Ohio Reformatory for Women* in Marysville, Ohio, who graciously have donated their original artwork to assist women leaving prison.

Proceeds from sales (\$10/box of 8) support the ongoing ministry of our prisoner reentry program.

The cards are available at some local stores and churches or they may be ordered by calling the Lower Lights office. Card samples and a list of participating stores, and churches are on our website.

Saturday Family Meal Grows as Weather Changes

As families feel the economic impact of winter utility bills and economic hardships, attendance to the Franklinton Family Meal on Saturday nights continues to grow. Weekly, church and civic groups volunteer to prepare a nutritious meal for area residents, as we dine "family style" and enjoy the fellowship of one another.

Rev. Phil Manson (Pickerington Church of the Nazarene), noting that service is part of his congregation's DNA, recently commented on his church's role. He states, "We always meet new friends and reap fresh blessings every time we serve..."



If you are interested in preparing a meal, please contact Anna Feeney at afeeney@lower-lights.org.

2009 Board of Directors Selected

This year marks milestones for much of the leadership of Lower Lights Ministries, including the retirement from full-time ministry of Rev. Jane Fulks, founder of Lower Lights. It is the dream and vision of Rev. Fulks that has guided Lower Lights Community to be the holistic, collaborative ministry it is today. Additionally, many board members will conclude their terms this year, including current Board Chairperson, Dr. Larry Pfahler (*Alpha Psychiatric Services of Worthington*), Board Secretary Rev. Rodney Kuhn (*Whitehall Church of the Nazarene*), Mr. Jim Laws (*Wal-Mart Optical*), and Mr. Darrell Ranum, esq. (*The Doctor's Company*). We are grateful for the valuable leadership provided by these dedicated individuals through their years of service.

Board Officers for 2009 include: Chairperson - Mr. Norbert Fischer (*American Electric Power*); Vice-Chairperson - Ms. Sue Toth (*Re/Max Impact*); Secretary - Mr. Scott "Buzz" Inboden (*Worthington Christian Schools*); Treasurer - Ms. Barbara Trent (*McGraw Hill*). Other members include: Ms. Gloria Fitzpatrick (*Former Franklinton Resident*), Rev. Trevor Johnston (*Central Ohio Nazarene District*), Ms. Sharlon Koch (*Avondale Elementary School/Franklinton Resident*), Mr. Bill Mowry (*The Navigators*), Mr. Mike Redcay (*Cameron Mitchell/Franklinton Resident*), and Rev. Mike Vallangeon (*Lower Lights Community Church of the Nazarene/Franklinton Resident*).



Project AIM Participants - *“Energized” about the Future*

A few years ago, a group of Christmas carolers from Lower Lights Community Nazarene stopped on the porch of Jim and Christine Balsler to share Christmas tidings. The carolers were met at the door by the excited, smiling faces of Patrick and Britknee, Jim and Christine’s two children. It was not the first time the Balsler family encountered Lower Lights as the kids had attended some children’s events, but no one knew a lasting friendship would follow.

Last year, Jim and his family participated in the “pilot” for *Project AIM* (Achieving Interdependence through Modeling), and they continue to participate in this ministry that focuses on equipping families to achieve their goals and dreams. The children, Patrick and Britknee continue to faithfully attend our children’s events, and the family can be seen every Sunday morning for worship service.

In 2007, Jim was facing a layoff and was given the opportunity by Greg Laws (President/CEO, *Fire Service Professionals*), a longtime Lower Lights supporter, to pursue a career as an electrician. Jim jumped at the opportunity, and says, “Working at FSP is very different from my other work experiences. I have much more consistent working hours and better pay with the opportunity for raises. The Christian culture of the workplace has been a really great element, especially when there is conflict. My co-workers come together as a team and resolve it.”

Jim’s new job, in addition to the financial benefits, has had a positive impact on the family. Christine observes, “Jim is much less stressed, and is easier to live with. Even the kids have noticed a change.” Jim adds that he enjoys having more quality and consistent time with the family.

Kyle Meyers, Director of *Project AIM*, feels the family works very hard to provide a positive family environment and serve as a model family that thrives even in the face of adversity. They continue to meet with their mentors whom they consider friends, and are now setting their sights on the next family goal – to become homeowners.

WHAT’S NEW

If you are around Lower Lights long enough, you realize that we are constantly seeking to move forward to impact Franklinton. Of late, that forward thrust has involved considerable property acquisition, including purchasing six housing units in two years.

Since first coming to Lower Lights seven years ago, Executive Director David Gay has had a dream of one day owning the six unit apartment building adjacent to the local church to provide the opportunity for low-income families to have safe, supportive housing as they look to achieve their goals. A portion of the dream became a reality last winter when Lower Lights purchased one of the units.



This December, however, the whole dream can be fulfilled with your support. Lower Lights Ministries is currently seeking lead gifts to purchase this property. **By mid-December, we are seeking \$20,000 to move forward and secure this property when low-income families need housing the most!**

If you would like to learn more about this opportunity, please contact our offices to make a gift or schedule a visit.

Lower Lights Staff Serve Area Tutoring Program

As part of our commitment to the Franklinton neighborhood, Lower Lights' staff members are encouraged to spend 10% of their time "on the clock" serving other organizations or neighborhood initiatives. This year, the majority of employees have committed to serve with the Franklinton Tutoring Program at Dana Elementary School. One day a week, staff members tutor students during their lunch period in order that kids can have the necessary reading skills they need to succeed.

The program was designed by Rev. Tyler Flynn of *Mission Columbus*, and has made significant impact in our schools over the years. If you would like to "volunteer" with us, we encourage you to find out more about this important community partnership by visiting www.missioncolumbus.net or by contacting Anna Feeney, *Director of Volunteer Services* at Lower Lights, who also serves as the Tutoring Coordinator.

Special thanks to all who attended the Fourth Annual *Celebration of Hope* banquet. Thanks to your generosity, we raised over \$40,000 in gifts and pledges. We also thank special guests, Mr. Cabot Rea (*NBCA*), Mr. Larry Wigton (*Wigton Auctioneers*) and the Hamilton Road Gospel Quartet, as well as the countless volunteers who made the event possible.

Lower Lights Ministries is a faith-based, non-profit organization established in 1991 to promote the well-being and development of our community by **partnering together as loving neighbors** - moving people from "get" to "give," and thus restoring Franklinton to a thriving neighborhood.

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