



## South Hills Interfaith Ministries

5301 Park Avenue  
Bethel Park, PA 15102

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# Dignity & Respect

A publication of South Hills Interfaith Ministries

Summer/Fall 2009

## Dreams Do Come True...

The lyrics, "When you wish upon a star, your dreams come true..." comes from a nostalgic Disney tune, but it took more than dreams to make the move to our new location come to fruition. It took hard work and the vision of the Board of Directors to dream big. As of late June, the offices of South Hills Interfaith Ministries have relocated to 5301 Park Avenue in Bethel Park. We are located directly across South Park Road from the School House Art Center. Our telephone and fax numbers remain the same.

In 2006, the Board of Directors began a study to assess the needs of the client base we serve. According to Past Chairperson of the SHIM Board, Shelley Scherer, "There was a tremendous sense of urgency to make our services more accessible to those in need." While pastoral in nature, the Sleepy Hollow site was limiting clients who rely on public transportation from best using SHIM services. With that in mind, the Sleepy Hollow location went on the market and stayed there for over 18 months. With a buyer secured, various South Hills communities were scoured for a location that "provided greater visibility and access to public transportation." Clearly a divine intercession, Park Avenue is on the cross street of heavily traveled South Park Road and one short block walk from the T station. Prayers are answered; dreams come true.



Vacant for close to three years, Park Avenue was not in "move-in" ready condition. Extensive interior upgrades and cleaning was in order. SHIM is so blessed to have the support of the faith community and the individual volunteers who believe in and support its' mission with their time, talents and financial resources. Once again the call for assistance was met with an overwhelming positive response. Literally hundreds and hundreds of volunteer man hours were donated to patch, paint, repair and ready the building for occupancy. Equally as important, were the volunteers who assisted in packing up the offices and food pantry for the move and then helping to restore some sense of order once the move was in motion. According to current SHIM Board Chairman, Warren Archer, "clearly our volunteers with a "can do attitude" are SHIM's biggest asset and resource. This transition could not have gone so smoothly if not for their willingness to do whatever it takes. Kudos to all who had a hand in our move."

While configured differently than Sleepy Hollow, the square footage of the new location is approximately the same. The food pantry and clothing distribution areas have increased in size allowing a better traffic pattern on pantry days and a more extensive selection of clothing options. As we look forward to the future, the Park Avenue facility offers capacity to either expand SHIM's programs or to collaborate with other non-profits to offer additional services. We welcome you to stop in for a tour.

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free within PA 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

## Jack Frost Nipping at Your Nose

Winter weather will be upon us quicker than you know. With the drop in temperature there will be a rise in heating costs. For many families the added expense will be beyond their means. We are seeking computer literate volunteers to assist in the online application process for the Dollar Energy program. Training will be provided in early fall and enrollment dates will be scheduled November thru April. Please call Doris Nagel at 412-854-9120 ext. 20 to volunteer for this worthwhile community initiative.

## Honey It's Going To Get Cold Outside

We will all be searching in the closet for our winter coats soon. Sorry it is inevitable. Yet many of our families will not have the basics of winter coats, hats, and gloves to protect themselves. We are in need of NEW or gently used winter coats. Might you consider conducting a coat drive? Ask your family to search their closets, coordinate a new coat drive at your place of business, use the sales coupons at local stores to supplement what you collect.

All contributions are welcome.



## Mission

South Hills Interfaith Ministries (SHIM) is an interfaith organization actively extending God's love with dignity and respect to the people of the South Hills of Pittsburgh.

## Staff

Executive Director  
JIM GUFFEY

Executive Assistant  
MAGGIE WINTER

Program Director  
DORIS NAGEL

Community Relations Manager  
JEANNA-MAR SIMMONS

Financial Administrator  
CAROL COWSER

## Prospect Park Family Center

Site Director  
COURTNEY BAHR MACURAK

Family Development Specialist  
LORI HALLER

Community Liaison  
JINAN HISSAN

## Programs

- Food Pantry, clothing room and utility assistance
- Early childhood program for preschool-aged children
- After-school homework clubs
- Professional counseling services through Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute
- Multi-cultural and interfaith community education

## Contact Us

Learn more about how you can help support our mission, please call us at 412-854-9120 or visit us online at [www.shim-center.org](http://www.shim-center.org).

## Volunteers Are Needed

Without the support of our volunteers, we could not provide the many services and programs we offer. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Maggie Winter at 412 854-9120 ext. 10 or email us at [info@shim-center.org](mailto:info@shim-center.org) and we will do our best to match our various opportunities with your interests and talents.

# Message from the Executive Director,

To say that 2008 and 2009 have been challenging years would be an understatement. The economic climate has been one of the most challenging that we have faced in memory. While we continuously monitor our expenses, SHIM is blessed to have exercised strong financial stewardship and we are positioned to weather the months ahead. While our service numbers have steadily increased, we have been blessed to have the strong, continuing support of our donors and volunteers. We are extremely grateful for your support of SHIM's mission.

As SHIM approaches the start of a new fiscal year on October 1st, we will focus on five major areas:

1. enhancing communication with our donors and volunteers;
2. committing to provide excellent service to all SHIM program participants;
3. enhancing programs to enable our participants to attain self-sufficiency;
4. creating measurable outcomes for SHIM's programs to ensure effectiveness;
5. ensuring a strong commitment to sound stewardship principles for all of SHIM's resources.

I look forward to having the opportunity to report to you during the coming months and year ahead of our progress on these focus areas.

I would like to remind all of our supporters that should you know of an individual or family experiencing financial difficulty during these challenging times, please refer them to SHIM. If we cannot provide the needed immediate assistance, we will do our best to refer them to other agencies that can more adequately meet their needs.

As always, the SHIM staff and I are here to assist you should you have any questions or concerns. Please do not hesitate to call upon us. Finally, I cannot say thank you enough for the support that you, our donors and volunteers, have given to SHIM. We are extremely blessed to have you!



## Summer Blessings

"Good help is hard to find" is a statement that does not apply to summer interns, Monica Seger and Brittney Leigh Steeb. Monica, a sophomore at the University of Pittsburgh majoring in general management and Brittney Leigh international studies major at California University of Pennsylvania were blessings to work with during our summer transition. Monica's "what can I do next" attitude and Brittney's strong database and research skills were a gift to the organization when so much was going on. They were wonderful to work with and we look forward to hearing how they will continue to make a difference in the world.

## United Way Contributor Choice

If your work place conducts a United Way campaign you can support SHIM through donor option. Should you choose to designate all or part of your gift, please remember South Hills Interfaith Ministries and our contributor choice #383. The United Way offers an easy and painless way to support SHIM through payroll deduction.

## Creative Ways to Get Involved at SHIM

**As a volunteer:**  
Youth Outreach:  
Homework Club tutor  
Early Childhood Program Aides  
Family Assistance:  
Food Pantry  
Clothing Room  
Van Driver  
Administrative Support  
Receptionist

Data Entry  
Research  
Building Maintenance  
Painting  
Gardening  
"Odds and Ends" jobs  
Special Events/Fundraisers  
Food Drives  
Special Events volunteer  
Entertainment/Enjoy Book Sales

### As a civic organization or business

- Organize a food drive or school supply drive
- Become a sponsor of a special event
- Coordinate a spaghetti dinner, pancake breakfast or bake sale, donating the proceeds to SHIM
- Designate SHIM as your charity of choice and raise funds from within your organization to support our mission
- Collect NEW or gently worn winter coats

### As a congregation:

- Distribute bags at the end of your worship service asking for food items to be brought back the next week for SHIM
- Collect school supplies for our "Back to School Program"
- Facilitate a drive for Angel Emporium gift items
- Include SHIM as part of your congregations mission/outreach giving

For additional ideas or support in getting started contact: Jeanna-Mar Simmons –Community Relations Manager at [jsimmons@shim-center.org](mailto:jsimmons@shim-center.org)

## Consider Your Legacy

While there are many ways in which an individual can support SHIM, one way that is commonly overlooked is through your estate planning. The federal estate tax can take a significant percentage out of one's estate. With a little advance planning and professional guidance from an attorney or professional financial advisor, you can lessen the tax amount. Please consider a charitable bequest to SHIM in your will. Your gift will help ensure that the work of SHIM will continue.

## Bountiful Bonus

Nation-wide food pantries play an important role in supplementing millions of daily meals. Staples like pastas, soups and peanut butter are commonly available for those in need. However, fresh produce is often considered a luxury item. Through our relationship with The Great Pittsburgh Food Bank, SHIM has been the beneficiary of multiple produce drops at both our Bethel Park and Prospect Park Apartment distribution locations. Pallets of corn, tomatoes, apples, yellow squash and watermelon have been a welcome supplement to the food items we make available to our families. With a national spotlight on obesity, SHIM is pleased to be able to increase the number of fresh fruits and vegetables available to pantry clients, thus promoting healthy dietary choices. The supply is unpredictable and is based on excess from the field, so SHIM has to mobilize volunteer crews at a moments notice to sort and distribute this bountiful bonus. As always our volunteers come to our aid to make it happen, our gratitude is beyond measure.



## Healthy Lifestyles-Healthy Choices

The Prospect Park Family Center (PPFC) coordinates services for over 40 enrolled families, with children ages 0-5, who live in the Prospect Park Apartment complex in Whitehall. A vast majority of these families are refugees. Due to their experiences prior to resettlement and during the resettlement process, these families often require comprehensive medical services upon arrival in the United States.

One of the five major goals of the Family Center is to assist parents in obtaining appropriate medical insurance and care for their families. This can often be a challenge due to language and transport difficulties, isolation, financial pressures and ongoing stress. Family Development Specialists, Lori Haller and Kelly Crawford and Site Director Courtney Bahr Macurak, spend time with families, often with the assistance of interpreters, discussing cultural norms, personal hygiene, preventative care and how to best avail themselves of appropriate health services. This summer with the assistance of summer intern, Senayit Haile from the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health, three informational seminars were conducted for Prospect Park residents, focusing on dental care, women's health issues and breast health.



### Dental care

Students from University of Pittsburgh's School of Dental Medicine conducted a workshop that focused on good oral hygiene. Demonstrations on how to best brush and floss teeth; the importance of not allowing infants/children to fall asleep with a bottle in their mouths, thus preventing "baby bottle tooth decay"; and what happens at a dentist office were highlighted. All participants received free toothpaste, toothbrushes and dental floss.

### Susan G. Komen Foundation- Breast Health

A representative from the foundation, taught participants how to do a self-breast exam; what a mammogram is and what to expect during testing. The focus was on early detection and getting appropriate treatment.

### Women's Health Issues

Dr. Gilboa from Squirrel Hill Health Center where many Prospect Park families access medical services, shared information on family planning, what to expect at doctors appointments and the benefits of prenatal care and good nutrition.

## Spotlight on ...Kamp Kaleidoscope



"Wow, what a summer!!!," Program Director Doris Nagel has been heard to say. "Our employees (consisting of 12 paid staff and 4 certified teachers) rose to the challenge of making every day an exciting adventure." Kamp Kaleidoscope, open to all Whitehall youth who completed kindergarten thru the completion of 7th grade, drew an average of 75-85 students per day during its six week run.

In collaboration with the Whitehall Borough Recreation Department and the Baldwin-Whitehall School District, the students were exposed to a wide variety of activities that both stimulated their minds and bodies. While always fun in nature, each day, portions of the program included a focus on language and literacy activities, as well as math and logic exercises. Special

opportunities included a trip to the zoo and to a Pittsburgh Pirates game, fitness programs conducted by area Girl Scouts, swimming lessons at the Whitehall pool, mini-golf, music and movement sessions and the standard arts and crafts opportunities. "We are glad to play a role in these children's continuing growth and development," adds Nagel.

### A New Twist on Brown Bagging It

Can you imagine packing bag lunches for 100? Through the generosity of three local congregations, supplemented by additional program resources, lunch time meals were provided for all of the participating campers. Special thanks to Community of Christ in Bethel Park, Bethany Presbyterian Church in Bridgeville and Southminster Presbyterian Church in Mount Lebanon. Without the commitment of these "lunch angels" our mission to feed the mind and body would have been challenging.

## Uncertain Economic Times Make for Uncertain Meal Times

### State Perspective

According to Pennsylvania Hunger Action Network, "here in Pennsylvania, and based on an average of three years of data (2005-2007), the USDA report indicates that 10.0 percent of Pennsylvania households experienced food insecurity at some point in the 12 months preceding the survey. Translated into human terms, an estimated 494,600 Pennsylvania households were at risk of hunger. In an estimated 168,164 of these households, at least one household member experienced hunger."

Food insecurity is driven by economic trends, especially the decline in the buying power of wages. It translates directly into more people who need help from pantries, food banks and child nutrition programs. As evidenced by the rise in hunger in recent years, charitable efforts find it challenging to keep up with the growing number of people at risk.

Households that meet a part of their food needs through a food pantry/cupboard are among the food insecure. During October 2008 an estimated 483,000 Pennsylvanians received food assistance in this way. Based on a Hunger Action survey of 1132 pantries and cupboards, the number of households seeking help in October 2008 was 5 percent higher than in October 2007 and 23 percent higher than in October 2002 when the survey was first taken.

### South Hills Perspective

"We're seeing working families struggling as layoffs start to affect people and unemployment benefits run out," says Executive Director Jim Guffey. "Since this time last year

SHIM has increased the number of families served from 179 to over 235, a 24% percent increase. These family units represent over 740 individuals, up from 572 just a year ago. Senior citizens on limited incomes continue to grow in numbers, as health care costs eat into their discretionary dollars there is a growing need for food assistance. As fall turns to winter and the added cost of heating is factored into family budgets, we anticipate a rise in the number of individuals and families seeking our services."

### What can you do to help?

As you have read, our number of clients has increased dramatically and most likely will continue to grow; as a result we have an increased need for food and volunteers. We appreciate all form of contributions to SHIM, and are often asked how an individual can best participate in our interfaith outreach in the South Hills. All donations in-kind or food products for our pantry are welcomed. Most churches and individuals collect food to provide to SHIM, and generously shop at local grocery stores or box stores to provide food and other items. This is indeed a blessing. However, monetary contributions allow SHIM to leverage often times twice the food product from the Greater Pittsburgh Food Pantry. Donor gifts can be multiplied and maximized by this food purchase strategy. Might you consider writing a check to SHIM next time you wish to contribute so that our families can get the greatest the return on your investment of the heart?

Data collected in 2005 by America's Second Harvest, the national food bank network, provides the following profile of people who receive food assistance from charitable food providers:

- 39 percent were children;
- 12 percent were seniors;
- 42 percent lived in rural or suburban areas and 58 percent lived in metropolitan areas;
- 88 percent had a residence; 53 percent had access to a working car;
- 66 percent of households had incomes that were below \$15,670, which was then the federal poverty level for a family of three;
- 35 percent of households received food stamps;
- 04 percent received welfare; and
- 36 percent of recipient households included an employed adult.

\* The above information was gathered from the following website: <http://www.pahunger.org>

Food security is defined as "assured access at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life, with no need for recourse to emergency food sources or other extraordinary coping behaviors to meet basic food needs". People who frequently worry about the source of their next meal, or who need the help of food pantries or of extended family members in order to eat, are "food insecure". Hunger is defined as "the uneasy or painful sensation caused by lack of food due to the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food".

# Crayons and Pencils...Backpacks and Pens

Back-to-School at SHIM and Prospect Park was a huge success. Thank you to all those who contributed school supplies or funding to help with this year's Back to School program. Thanks to your support, over 300 children are prepared to start a new school year with confidence. We could not offer this program without the assistance of the greater South Hills community.

Bethany Lutheran Church  
Ms. Donna Johnson  
Bethel Park Lioness Club  
Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester Kukich  
Bower Hill Community Church- Mission Committee  
Dormont-Mt. Lebanon-Castle Shannon Rotary  
South Hills Chick-fil-A  
Mr. and Mrs. Gary May  
Dormont AARP #3016  
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis McCracken  
Dormont United Methodist Church  
Mr. and Mrs. Dave McFadden  
Ms. Rita Madak  
Ms. Kathie Nicholson  
Ms. Eleanor Eshleman  
Ms. Lora O'Brien  
Faith Lutheran Church  
Ms. Patty Robison  
Unitarian Universalist Church of the South Hills  
St. Gregory's Byzantine Catholic Church  
Ms. Martha Sweeney

St Louise de Marillac  
Hamilton Presbyterian Church  
Ms. Darlene Stocker  
The McMullen Family  
Tim McMullen & Jack Durkin  
The McMullan Family's  
Annual Block Party Participants  
First Bethel United Methodist Church  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jenkins  
Wal-Mart Foundation  
John McMillan Presbyterian Church  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Walsh  
Pride of Bethel Park  
St. Valentine's Catholic Church  
Healthtrax Members  
Lincoln Elementary School  
Jefferson Hills Bible Church  
Foster Elementary School  
Ms. Betsy Richter  
Ellie Broz  
*\*And to all those who donated anonymously to this program.\**



SHIM relies heavily on food donation drives to stock food pantries in Bethel Park and Whitehall. One of our most successful food drives involves young boys and men from all over Allegheny County. SCOUTING FOR FOOD is a community stewardship project aimed at addressing the problem of hunger in the

community in which the scouts live. As a yearly event held in late spring, early summer, Scouting for Food provided SHIM with much needed staples during the "lean" summer months when local school and congregational donations are sometimes affected by summer vacations.

SHIM would like to thank the following units and their leaders from the CONESTOGA AND STEEL CITY DISTRICTS of the Greater Pittsburgh Council of the Boy Scouts of America for their generous support:

- Boy Scout Troop 284, Beverly Heights Presbyterian Church
- Cub Scout Pack 600, William Penn Elementary School, Bethel Park
- Boy Scout Troop 569, South Park
- Cub Scout Pack 569, South Park
- Cub Scout Pack 8, Ben Franklin Elementary School, Bethel Park
- Boy Scout Troop 215, Bethel Presbyterian Church, Bethel Park
- Cub Scout Pack 215, Bethel Presbyterian Church, Bethel Park
- Cub Scout Pack 661, Southminster Presbyterian Church, Upper St. Clair

# Are you smarter than an elementary school student? After School Tutors Needed

With the start of the school year, there is a keen need for homework club tutors at the following locations: Parkford Apartments in South Park and Prospect Park Apartments in Whitehall. The primary focus of this initiative is to help each child with their school assignments and to increase their readiness and study skills. As an added benefit to enhanced academic skills, they gain self-confidence while developing trusting relationships with their tutors. Clubs begin in October and run through April, meeting one to two times per week depending on location. Contact Doris Nagel at 412-854-9120 ext. 20 to join the Homework Club team. Training will be provided.

## Making a list and checking it twice... preparing for the holiday season

It's early September and school buses are just being seen back on our community streets, but at SHIM we are already looking ahead to the holiday season, in preparation for Angel Emporium December 7-10th. The Angel Emporium program provides a brighter holiday for the families served by our Family Assistance Programs and the Prospect Park Family Center. Currently, we serve over 740 individuals with 50% of those served being children under the age of 18.

Our clients have the opportunity to come and select gifts for all members of their family- parents for children and children for parents. Please consider having your family, civic organization, business or place of worship participate in this initiative by contacting the SHIM office for a list of Gift Ideas. We are accepting unwrapped NEW donations starting in September.

## Announcing the Nancy Collie Book Bag Memorial Fund

SHIM is saddened by the recent passing of long time volunteer Nancy Collie, a retired teacher with a passion for our Back to School Program. Over the years Nancy, with the assistance of her friends and former educational colleagues who were members of the Alpha Pi Foundation, Delta Kappa Gamma Chapter, coordinated stuffing back packs with school supplies in support of our initiative. As a tribute to their mother and her passion for education her son Gerry Dudley and daughter Jane Fortna created a special fund here at SHIM where friends and family could recognize and honor her by making a contribution to SHIM in lieu of flowers; our thanks to her family for honoring her in this way.

## Entertainment and Enjoy Book Sales



Once again, in an effort to raise funds, SHIM is selling Entertainment books\* for \$20 and Enjoy books for \$27. Ways you can help: purchase your book through us; become an Entertainment/Enjoy book sales person for SHIM. There are 3 simple steps to becoming a sales person: 1) Contact SHIM to supply you with books, which you do not purchase in advance; 2) Sell the books to your family, friends, and business associates; 3) Collect the money as books are sold and remit the proceeds to SHIM. This is a great opportunity for congregations, civic organizations, companies and places of business to support SHIM. To learn more contact Maggie Winter at 412-854-9120 x10.

\* Please note that the Entertainment book has consolidated its Pittsburgh East and Pittsburgh South into one book.