

TRACK MINISTRY NEWS

Race Track Chaplaincy of America, Pennsylvania Division, Inc.

"Sharing God's Love at Philadelphia Park"

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IN THIS ISSUE

Children's Christmas Party 2007
Thanks to Those Who Contributed
2007 "Heroes of the Track" Award
Words from Our Council President
Chaplain Cordell's Health
Ethel's Corner
Chapel 'n Chow Nights

Children's Christmas Party 2007

Santa arrived with bells on and many Ho Ho Ho's! The band was playing and the children were laughing, doing crafts and looking forward to receiving their gifts. Administrative Assistant, Molly Shallcross, had plenty of "elves" there to help her. Photographer Elwood Seybert came with his handy camera, capturing the children and all their smiles! Ron Finley, manager of the Backstretch Café provided hot dogs, and Kevin Reynolds of Reynolds Hay and Straw, Inc., donated 30 extra large pizzas, plus soda and cake to feed a hungry bunch. With Jody King's Band, Santa, crafts and the gifts, and great food, did we ever have a fantastic party!



This family spent time at the manger scene.



Mom and all her daughters had a Merry time!!

Thanks to Those Who Contributed

Without the faithful support of so many churches and individuals as well as the "White Cross" program of the American Baptist Women's Ministries, the Children's Christmas Party would be a mere shadow of what we do. We very sincerely appreciate your dedication to this unique work.

This year we were able to provide gifts for as many as 160 children registered for the Party. Then, largely through "White Cross" gifts, we provided Christmas for each dorm resident on the backstretch. Again, we thank you for your wonderful commitment to the racetrack.

2007 "Heroes of the Track" Award

The Council and several invited guests attended the Third Annual "Heroes of the Track" Award luncheon at Michael's Restaurant in Bensalem, PA, to honor a person whose has been of enormous help to the backstretch workers. This year's recipient was Mrs. Bobbie Enke. The plaque read ". . . to Bobbie Enke in recognition of her extraordinary commitment to the backstretch employees at Philadelphia Park Racetrack." Through her efforts, the backstretch people often enjoy meals provided by local organizations, businesses and churches. Her position in Community Relations with "Old Country Buffet" gives Bobbie a network of people who care about the racetrack, and she devotes herself to doing whatever she can to help the track workers. God has blessed us, because Bobbie cares for people. Bobbie is a member of Harriman United Methodist Church in Bristol, PA.



Council President, the Rev. Linda Haughton (L), presented Mrs. Bobbie Enke (R) a plaque honoring her as the 2007 recipient of the "Heroes of the Track" Award.

Words from Our Council President

The Council of RTCA, PA Division, administers, promotes, and provides for ministry at the racetrack, supervises and evaluate the Chaplain, and works with him to support him and his ministry with the track employees to nurture them spiritually and emotionally, and provide physical and/or financial assistance when needed.

With the death of our President, the Rev. Dr. J. Val Hastings, Sr., in October 2007, the Council

has had to reorganize. Val dearly loved the track ministry and provided dedicated leadership for many years. We are blessed to have a Council whose members have that same love and dedication. Newly elected officers are the Rev. Linda Haughton, President; the Rev. Thomas Brooks, Vice-President; Mr. Donald Hogeland, Treasurer; and Mr. Rey Roque, Secretary. Other Council members include the Rev. Nelson Krute, Mrs. Hilda Garcia, Mr. Dan Sourwine, the Rev. Christine Holcomb and Chaplain Cordell.

Council members regularly pray for Chaplain Cordell and his ministry and support him in a variety of ways. Rey Roque and Hilda Garcia, our Spanish-speaking members, faithfully assist with Chapel service each Wednesday. Several of our Council members substitute for the Chaplain on occasions when he is out of the office. They also promote the ministry in their churches and many assist with the Special Events at the track throughout the year. We are deeply grateful for Chaplain Cordell and the many ways he touches people's lives with the good news of the gospel. Each Council member considers it a privilege and a blessing to work with the Chaplain and to share in this unique and valuable ministry to and with the racetrack family.



Council Members - RTCA, PA Division, Inc.

Seated (L to R) Rey Roque, Secretary; Donald Hogeland, Treasurer; Chaplain Cordell; Rev. Tom Brooks, Vice-President; Rev. Linda Haughton, President.
 Standing (L to R): Rev. Christine Holcomb; Mrs. Hilda Garcia; Mr. Dan Sourwine, and Rev. Nelson Krute.

Council Member Emeritus – Rev. Dr. Nicholas Salios



Jody King (R) brought his band and provided lively, enthusiastic music for the Christmas Party. On the stand in front of the trio is a picture in memory of Walter Hughes, who had arranged music for the Party for many years. Walter, a lifetime pony rider, loved the children and the Annual Party. We miss our friend, Walt.

Chaplain Cordell's Health

Many of you know that the doctors diagnosed me in December as having cancer – Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, located in my throat. The doctors will be treating it with chemotherapy and radiation, which will take several weeks. The prognosis is good. Thanks to all of you who have been praying as well as those who have sent cards and notes of encouragement. How very true it is that God shows his power and grace through his people in times like these.

In his timing, God has sent Ethel Guy, the Palmer Seminary student intern, to the track to be a great help to us during the weeks ahead. Also, local pastors and Board members will be pitching in to carry the load during the weeks of this Chaplain's limited involvement at the track.



After lovingly wrapping all those presents for the children and stuffing them into the huge bags, Ethel (Center) and Molly (Right) collapsed for just a brief rest before moving on to packing the gifts for the dorm residents!

Ethel's Corner

I love "Chapel 'n Chow" nights on the backstretch. Ever since I began my field education at Philadelphia Park, I have looked forward to those nights when volunteers arrive with wonderful meals and we all gather in chapel to sing, to pray, and to give thanks before sitting together over the bounty our visitors have brought us. On one such recent night, I sat back to enjoy my coffee and reflect on the lively, warm scene when a memory began creeping into my consciousness.

Suddenly, I am once again a teenager, coming home from school to my mother's restaurant. In the very front, at the biggest, most important table, sits a family of five, hungrily eating a large dinner. My mother admonishes me to be quiet. "They just came in off the road. The father lost his job. They need a good meal to warm them." Now, we weren't wealthy, by any means. Mother was always just one payment ahead of the creditors at most. But she saw need in the world, and she met it as best she could. Her cure for everything was "a good meal."

And here I am, so many years later, in the midst of yet another "good meal." The fellowship and sharing among our backstretch folks and the people who visit us with food creates more than full stomachs. Jesus' last words to Peter before he ascended to his father were, "Feed my lambs." (John 21:15). I don't think he meant for Peter to go into the restaurant business. As we eat together we are affirming each other as fellow travelers on life's road whether we work with the horses or in the surrounding communities. The good food we eat together is the means to the end of feeding each others' souls as well, and strengthening us all for the next step in the journey, wherever God may lead us. I am so glad my mother knew this.

Chapel 'n Chow Nights

During the fall the stable employees enjoyed meals provided by the Bucks County YWCA Board, Staff and volunteers (Oct. 10), First Baptist Church, Levittown-Fairless Hills, PA (Oct. 24); Harriman United Methodist Church, Bristol, PA (Nov. 14 and Dec. 19); the Building a Better Bensalem Diversity Committee (Nov. 28), and individuals who contributed gifts to provide meals. We are indeed blessed to overflowing through loving, caring people who are so generous to the backstretch workers.

