

## IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY PARISH NEWSPAPER

# Heart ♥ Beat

Published since 1978 by Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (1944–2007)

February 2007

## They Live Their Strengths

BY ELIZABETH BOOKSER BARKLEY

Ask Tim Becker about his favorite saint and he doesn't hesitate: "St. Paul—he was passionate for Christ, he fought the good fight, finished the race. He achieved!" Little wonder, then, that when Tim completed the "Living Your Strengths" online survey as part of a parish stewardship process, one of his strengths was "achiever."

To help launch parish-wide participation in this new initiative (see related story on page \_\_\_\_), several parishioners reflected on the process and the results.

Having been involved in leadership development for many years, Tim had already put the book of the same title by Dr. Al Winseman on his "to read" list. Through his wife Jennifer he learned that "the book was actually 'a process,'" one he found easy to complete in about an hour.

Although he was hesitant to see what his "top five" strengths were, he found the results "entrancing."



Jim Moyer

"They were consistent strengths that show up on my performance evaluations at work: achiever, learner, strategic, command, responsibility—I would have to say it is pretty accurate," he said.

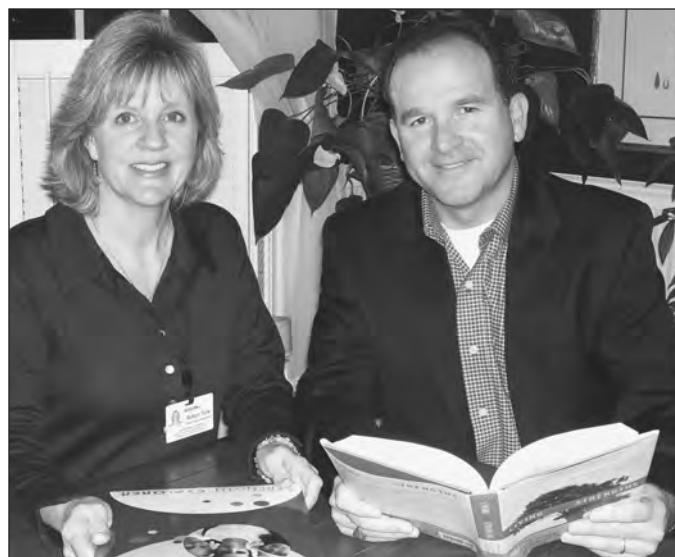
Jim Moyer also thought the result of the survey, similar to others he had taken at work, "provided a highly accurate assessment of how I view myself."

His top five strengths emerged as responsibility, arranger, connectedness, relator and belief—all of which are explained in more depth in the book, a companion to the online survey.

But how do such personal results enhance the quality of life at IHM parish?

Now that Jim is retired, he is "assessing what I want to do in this 'next stage of life.'" These results will help him evaluate "how I can be of service to others in a way that builds on what I can do best."

For Tim, the survey findings have "enhanced by confi-



Cutline

dence in strengths that I was aware of but had no way of confirming. In the future, as I go about seeking ways to give back from a time and talent perspective, I will use my strengths to guide my stewardship."

In addition to the adult survey, there is a youth version, which, according to Tim, "can help parents have a greater connection with their children through understanding a child's strengths and thus fulfilling God's will for that child."

For Robyn Tore, taking the assessment along with her 11-year-old son has not been "a big change, but has provided a vocabulary for us."

For Robyn personally, the most obvious impact of the survey has been "how I am more accepting and tolerant of people different from me."

According to Jim, "The process could result in more parishioners becoming 'actively engaged' in the parish. We all have something to give and this process can be the first step for many."

Once the process is launched publicly in the parish, parishioners can contact Jim or Tim if they'd like more details.

"Anyone can contact me in any manner they are comfortable with: phone, email, group setting, one on one," Jim offered. "That's the great thing about being retired!"

## From the Pastor



By Father Jan Schmidt

Dear Parishioners,

We are now a bit beyond the celebration of New Years and the new and big surprises. As we enter more deeply into the year 2007 I would like to share a bit of news with those especially who missed earlier announcements.

As many are aware I have been appointed as the President of Archbishop McNicholas High School effective January 1, 2007. This is an interim position established to assure, along with the interim-Principal, Mr. Ed Hoffer, the continued and smooth operation of the high school through the end of this academic year.

As a 1972 graduate of McNicholas I must say that I could not be any more excited about this opportunity to give back to a very fine institution that helped to ground me in our faith and prepare me exceptionally well for the many exhilarating challenges I have had and have enjoyed in my life. Who would have ever thought that I might someday be called to serve in this capacity...it's an honor.

I am very humbled by the consideration given to me and very proud of my alma mater for the quality of education it continues to provide for students today. It's a great learning environment and one that certainly reflects, in its coeducational

(Continued on page 2)

### Inside:

Is It Flu?  
Or a Cold?

4

Get 'Smart'  
In Shopping

5

Of Books  
And Angels

7

Parishioner  
Sends Thanks

9

# 'Living Your Strengths' Will Help Unlock Talents

BY MIKE CASSANI

**D**o you truly know the person God created you to be? Would you like to discover your unique God given talents? Immaculate Heart of Mary is introducing a process that will help you to do just that. It's called "Living Your Strengths."

"Living Your Strengths" is a way to gain insight into yourself, and a way to learn how to live as God uniquely created you. In discovering your strengths, or themes of talent, you'll find keys to understanding yourself and the people around you more fully.

Dr. Al Winseman, author of the book "Living Your Strengths", writes, "There is something about the concept of talents and strengths that just 'feels right.' When we discover our talents, when we give them a name, something resonates deep within us. It is as if our spirits react to this discovery with a resounding 'Yes! This is the way it is supposed to be – this is who I was created to be.' And we find it somehow freeing: naming our greatest talents sets us free to develop them and live through them. Naming our top talents gives us permission to accept our areas of lesser talent and either discard them or manage them. It gives us permission to stop trying to be who we are not and concentrate on who we are – who we were originally created to be."

"Living Your Strengths" is both a book and a process. It is the result of research conducted with over 2 million people in a 30-year span. In discussions, focus groups and surveys, Dr. Donald Clifton and the Gallup Organization identified 34 themes of talent, or strength, that people possess in one degree or another.

Following that research, Clifton and his team developed the StrengthsFinder, an online questionnaire that takes only a half an hour to complete. StrengthsFinder has been used by organizations including businesses, schools, and churches throughout the world. At the end of the half hour, you'll have a list of your top five "signature" themes – the five ways in which you naturally interact with people and information most strongly.

All strengths are positive and are to be celebrated. Dr. Winseman writes, "You will be most successful in whatever you do by building your life around your greatest natural abilities rather than your weaknesses." He also writes, "When we focus on our talents, we are more effective at our tasks and roles. We are

also more successful, happy, and fulfilled."

Amazingly, you have a one in 275,000 chance of meeting someone with the same top five strengths as you in your lifetime, and a one in 33 million chance of meeting someone with your top five in the same order! We are, indeed, uniquely created to serve God in wonderful and powerful ways!

There are two ways for IHM parishioners to participate in Living Your Strengths. With either, you will need to purchase the book and take the online questionnaire. The parish is requesting that the results – the list of your top five talents – be emailed to leisaa@ihom.org so that opportunities may be developed for parishioners to do what they do best.

- **Small Group Option** For those already involved in groups or for those who would like to be a member of a small group, a four-session program developed by IHM will be offered. Small group facilitators are available to act as mentors to groups and Gifts Coordinators will also be available to help determine potential areas of ministry. Many parishioner leaders have already experienced the small group process or are doing so now. It is hoped that most parishioners will participate in a group during the season of Lent.

- **Individualized Option** For those not wishing or able to be a part of a small group, a self-guided reflection program developed by IHM will be offered. Mentors will be available to guide individuals and "gifts coordinators" will help to discern potential areas of ministry.

To order copies of "Living Your Strengths," complete the tear-slip below and return with your check to the Formation Office via the Sunday collection, the parish office, PRP/School, or postal mail. Books are \$16 each and include the one-time use computer code for the StrengthsFinder on the inside of the book cover. Versions of StrengthsFinder specifically designed for young adults and children are also available. For further details contact Leisa Anslinger in the Formation Office at 388-4093 or leisaa@ihom.org.

## From the Pastor

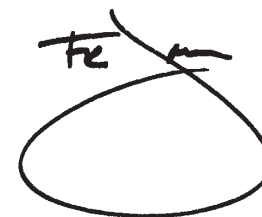
(Continued from page 1)

setting, the demeanor of society, preparing young men and women for advanced educational opportunities and eventual life in the professional world. Archbishop McNicholas is one great school, and I feel most blessed to be chosen for this special leadership role.

Life in the parish will continue as it does...without "skipping a beat." While my responsibilities at the school are significant I believe a balance can be achieved that will not deprive the parish of my presence. These early weeks are a bit crazy but as time progresses things should even out...I hope! I would appreciate your consideration and more importantly your prayer in these days.

May you have a most Blessed and Prayerful Lent and Easter.

God Bless,  
Fr. Jan



## 'Songs of Zion' CD: One You Have to Hear

BY MARY POMMERT

Wylie G. Howell and the St. Joseph's Choir

**W**hen I walked into IHM for 6 p.m. Mass one Sunday in mid-November, I had no idea the opening song would take my breath away. My full attention turned to the choir area and to the rich, melodic voice of the visiting vocalist and the soulful piano music that accompanied it. I was mesmerized.

When the music ended, my first thought was I *have* to hear that song again. As luck would have it, CDs were available for purchase after Mass. I made my way to the foyer, without stopping to talk to anyone, for fear the tapes would sell out, and I bought a copy.

What I purchased was a 15-song CD entitled "Songs of Zion." I have listened to the opening selection, "God Has Smiled on Me," nearly every day since. It's become an early morning meditation.

If I had to sum up in one sentence the collection of 15 songs that make up this CD, I'd say they are songs of stirring Gospel music that will touch you at the soul level...more restrained than all-out, let-loose Gospel music but strong and spiritual and addictive. It's hard to listen to this CD just once. In fact, I poured myself a glass of wine and played it over and over one night while wrapping Christmas gifts.

The CD has a little bit of everything on it, including four songs most Catholics will be familiar with: "The Lord is Kind and Merciful" (beautifully sung), "In This Very Room," "This Is the Day," and "Pie Jesu." The renditions of these songs are not what you're used to hearing, making them a pleasant surprise. One of my favorite songs is "Sanctuary," praise and worship-style music. Upbeat and uplifting, the refrain energizes with its repetitious:

Yes, we will praise you for the rest of our days. Yes!  
Yes, Lord, for the rest of our days. Yes!  
Yes, Lord, for the rest of our days. Yes!

(Continued on page 5)

### Living Your Strengths Book Order Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to order # \_\_\_\_\_ "Living Your Strengths" books at \$16 each. (Include a check with your order form. You will be contacted when your book(s) are available for pick-up.)

Check the appropriate box below:

I prefer the Small Group Option

I prefer the Individualized Option

## When Gab Turns to Gossip

BY SISTER CAROLE TEMMING, RSN

**Y**ou relax after a hard day, settle into a comfortable chair and call a friend. Or you bump into a friend or co-worker while running an errand, and before you know it, your conversation turns to the private life of a mutual friend or colleague. You speak in a confidential tone, criticizing the person's choices, examining character flaws, betraying secrets, passing along rumors.

Is it gab or gossip? You need to ask yourself this question: Would you say these things to the person's face? If the answer is "no," most likely it's gossip.

Gossip is not innocent. And it's not fun. It hurts. It judges. And it alienates. Yet nearly all of us engage in it at one time or another.

Bob Burg, co-author of the book "Gossip: Ten Pathways To Eliminate It From Your Life And Transform Your Soul," writes: "At one time I was a very big gossip. I loved speaking it, listening to it, and generally being around it. After realizing the devastation it can cause, I went on a personal mission to end it in my own life."

He identifies some of the reasons we gossip.

**It feels exciting**, placing us at the center of attention, providing a temporary "high" as we feel in the know, part of an elite inner circle.

**It builds us up**, creating a feeling of superiority, as we use gossip to judge and criticize others.

**It sabotages**, eliminating others from opportunities that we may want. We often do this unconsciously, in our desire to achieve a goal.

**It fills gaps in conversation**, creating the illusion that we're a stimulating, interesting conversationalist.

How much do you gossip? For a few days, write down every time you say something negative about someone who is not present. Record when others do the same, as well as your reactions — do you try to silence the person, or do you ask for details? During this time, don't change your ways — don't try to be more tolerant or understanding or kinder in your conversations. At the end of the time, analyze your patterns and attitudes. How much do you gossip? What will you do about it?



Project Education (Roger Klug with Junior and Perla)

## Project for Batahola Begins Its Second Year

BY MARY POMMERT

**I**n November 2005, IHM launched Project Education to help alleviate the poverty in Batahola, Nicaragua, by inviting parishioners to sponsor the education of individual students attending classes at the Cultural Center, IHM's twinning community. Parishioners were also able to sponsor scholarships for students to attend a grade school, high school, or college in Managua. The response to Project Education was overwhelmingly generous. More than 300 students were sponsored and over \$44,000 was raised, all for education.

Project Education for Batahola was launched again this past November. To date, this year's project has raised \$25,000, and sponsorships are still coming in.

According to Melissa Auvil, one of its organizers and a Friends of Batahola board member, "The most amazing thing about the program is that for \$75 a parishioner can have a major impact on a student. For us in the United States, that's hard to imagine, because \$75 doesn't go very far. But in Nicaragua, \$75 for a class is a chance for a better life."

Parishioners who sponsor Project Education students receive pictures of and information about their students. One parishioner, Roger Klug, traveled to Batahola last summer and was able to meet the two students he sponsored, Junior Alvarado and Perla Blas, both seven years old.

Roger said he brought some candy and a few small items for his meeting with Junior and Perla. According to Roger, "Junior especially liked the old baseball glove of mine and the box of marbles." For Perla, Roger took an Indian doll that he bought at IHM's garage sale a month earlier.

"We hugged each other and took pictures," Roger said. "It's really neat to see where your money is going and exactly who you are helping. When you give money to a charity, that doesn't usually happen."

On the humorous side, Roger said that Perla's mother came with Perla to meet him. Roger explained, through an interpreter, that his wife had passed away a year ago and that he was getting ready to move to a new house. Roger said that Perla's mother offered to come up and help him with the move.

This year, Roger renewed his sponsorship of both Junior and Perla, and he is also sponsoring a third student, a high school student, whose profile he said he's anxious to receive.

Paul Lake traveled to Nicaragua last summer with Roger and returned with a message from an 18-year-old female computer student. She said, "Tell everyone back at your church thank you very much. I would still be working at the clothes factory, if I did not have this opportunity to learn this trade." Paul said everyone at the Batahola Center is so appreciative of the work IHM has done to support the Center and education.

Project Education is about helping to break the cycle of poverty that grips the people of Batahola, but it's also about establishing relationships and making our twinning experience more personal, putting names and faces on our work there. We're not just sending money into a dark hole, we're changing lives...one student at a time.

*If you would like to become a Project Education sponsor, please contact Sue Keefe, Melissa Auvil, Jim Vorwald, Bob Sanker, or Mary Pommert.*

## Batahola Director A Real Winner

BY JANE PHELAN

**H**ow does a young woman from Boston become the director of the Batahola Cultural Center in Nicaragua? Jennifer Marshall found this position at idealistic.org—whose motto is "Action Without Borders," a site designed to bring together people and organizations who want to change their communities. One of 15 applicants, Jennifer's natural leadership abilities, commitment to helping others, and years of experience as a volunteer and as the worship leader and choir director at her parish made the difference.

Sister Margie Navarro, who founded the Center, would have been thrilled to welcome Jennifer—a savvy young woman committed to continuing her dream of giving people the opportunity to find dignity through work and learn life skills.

"It's all about helping people realize they can repair clothes from one's home rather than selling bottled water or various products at the stop light," said Jennifer. "It's also about changing attitudes; some men do not want women to work. 'Stay home and don't tempt the other men' is a common male viewpoint."

Jennifer spoke at the Breakfast for Batahola held at IHM in November. Her professionalism and passion for the mission of Batahola are truly inspiring and will help others to view meaningful work to be healthy for families.

Enrollments in classes at the Center were up 60 percent in 2006. New in 2006 was a nine-week micro business management course designed to teach the concepts of entrepreneurship, marketing, break-even point, pricing, and basic finance.

"People are chomping at the bit to sign up and put this information into practice," said Jennifer.

Saturday is the busiest day of the week for Jennifer because this is when the most classes are offered.

"Women in Nicaragua all know how to crochet, but knitting is virtually an unknown skill," said Jennifer, "and so I teach a knitting class on Saturdays." The knitting project: an attractive unisex hat.

"My most important job is to make myself available to students who need help or just want to talk." She plays the flute, so she's even able to lend a hand in the music department if needed. "My primary responsibilities, however, are fund raising, planning activities, and supporting the students in any way I can," said Jennifer.

Jennifer's goals for the Center are "to better connect people and local businesses, improve job placement, and support young start-up businesses."

Prior to joining the Batahola Cultural Center, Jennifer had been employed eight years by a nonprofit organization helping immigrants who

# Saying 'Yes' To God's Invitation

BY DONALD SABOL

The call came from Mike, and I had no reason not to answer it. He and I had played on the same over-30 softball team together and coached Anderson Township youth basketball team together. We have known each other for about 10 years, give or take a few. But this call had nothing to do with either.

He asked if I was interested in being part of Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) in October 2005. I had received the call from others at IHM in prior years and always had an excuse – once again I started to try to think of one. He didn't pressure me at all – he said think and pray about it. I said I would and then got off the phone and talked to my wife.

The calendar was free that weekend – soccer for my children not yet scheduled – school started – nothing on the work schedule – just an open weekend in October, two days to be part of something I knew nothing about. A good friend Ray had been through it years ago and couldn't say enough about it, but it was all nebulous and spiritual. Nothing concrete to make a CPA want to jump at it. (CPAs like to have something tangible, easier to audit.) Mike called a few weeks later to ask if I could make it – I told him I didn't have an excuse this time, so I said yes.

A simple word—yes—but in this case it changed my life and the life I have at the parish of IHM.

I stressed out the night before like I always do before big events and this was one that I knew little about – just bring a change of clothes, toiletries, pillow, sleeping bag, and we will go to church on Sunday at 11:30. Otherwise all else will be supplied for you by the parish. I was in the dark but still willing to follow to the light. I still had no excuses but stopped looking for one.

The "receiving weekend," as it was come to be called, introduced me to nine IHM parishioners who want to share with me their stories of faith formation and how God has impacted their lives in subtle and not so subtle ways. They were the givers.

There were 16 of us receiving that weekend and we sat in awe of the power of God in each of the givers. They were no different than me or any of us but, through their faith and the CRHP faith formation, were able to share their stories, and I was the unworthy receiver – amazed and dumbfounded to hear and feel their stories. A great gift was given that weekend that I still am unable to put into words. There was great fellowship, prayer and laughter, joy and sorrow but most of all the power of God was in the room with us through out the weekend. A great gift indeed.

A greater gift was received when I became part of the next CRHP team and got to know the 14 guys who decided to continue the process – continue to share what the Lord has given each of us. I knew none of the men in the group (except from what I learned during the receiving weekend) which became CRHP Team 47, except maybe seeing them in church. I knew not their names, occupations or how they got to where they are today, but the gift kept giving from that original weekend.

I got to know these 14 men and shared in their lives. I was once again given a gift that I felt I did not deserve – but isn't that the way of God He gives

to us whether we are worthy and only asks us to believe in Him, follow His commandments and share what He has given us?

We spent many Thursday nights in the annex sharing and laughing, talking and growing, but most of all knowing that God was with us through it all. These nights were wonderful – being a CPA and it being busy season, the meetings helped me forget about the stress and just be in the presence of my fellow CRHP members and God. It was the best tax season of my 20+ years as an accountant. My wife and family were amazed. They sensed a difference in me. I knew that I had changed – I was becoming something more than what I was before.

The faith formation that occurred made me do things I thought I would never do. I became an extraordinary Eucharistic minister, I participate in the Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration and volunteer up at IHM whenever possible. I had always been a passive parishioner – go to church, donate treasure and try to stay out of the way and not volunteer. I have turned 180 degrees.

In April 2006 we shared our faith and lives with a new group of IHM parishioners. This was the "giving weekend." This was an even greater gift as we were the givers this time, and the saying "it is better to give than receive" is very true. We were now on the other side of the table sharing our faith and our stories to these strangers and friends, but most of all we once again knew that God was with us.

CRHP introduced me to a whole new group of IHM parishioners. (It sometimes seems like a pyramid scheme to expand the number of people you will know in the parish, but a good scheme.) As part of the giving team, I got to hear and feel the stories again and see the impact on the receiving team. To say the least I felt our God in that room and know He is always with us. It was a powerful weekend.

As a team we continue on and meet each month to talk and share our lives. These 14 men have become great friends. We hope that God continues to fill our lives as we continue on our journey in this world with new friends and a better understanding of others.

In October 2006 we were present at the 11:30 Mass to support CRHP Team 48 as they were the givers to another group of parishioners. We all felt the power again of God as we greeted them in the back of church – the hugs and fellowship was shared again and the looks of joy and wonder as they completed their weekend. I remain in awe of the power of God and how He continues to give to those so unworthy. He is truly an awesome God.

If you get the chance and get a call from a friend or an IHM parishioner about CRHP and have not participated, please consider it a call from God. Those are calls we all should take and answer with an appropriate "Yes." I am glad I did.

## Save the Dates!!

### Christ Renews His Parish Weekends

Women's Weekend:  
March 24-25, 2007

Men's Weekend:  
April 21-22, 2007



## Our Parish Journeys Through Lent to the Glory of Easter

### Ash Wednesday, February 21, 2007

Masses at 6:30 a.m., 8:15 a.m. (with our school children), 12:00 noon, and 7:00 p.m.

### Lenten Evening Prayer

Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.

### Holy Thursday (April 5, 2007)

Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:00 p.m.  
Night Prayer at 11:30 p.m.

### Good Friday (April 6, 2007)

Morning Prayer at 8:15 a.m.  
Celebration of the Lord's Passion at 12:00 noon  
and 7:00 p.m.

### Holy Saturday (April 7, 2007)

Morning Prayer at 8:15 a.m.

### Easter Vigil (April 7, 2007)

9:00 p.m.

### Easter Sunday (April 8, 2007)

Masses at 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m.\*, and 11:30 a.m.\*  
and 1:30 p.m. (in Spanish)  
(There will be no 6:00 p.m. Mass)

\*Mass will be celebrated in both the church  
and cafeteria

## May Crowning

May 2, 2007  
7:00 p.m.



# IHM Darfur Efforts Continue

BY SHERRIE HEYSE

This year IHM Social Ministries Commission has worked on the issue of Darfur, along with the Archdiocese Social Action Office and the Greater Cincinnati Advocates for Darfur. This was a busy year of education and advocacy.

In February of 2006 the commission presented an educational issue forum for our parish and surrounding parishes. Dan Griffin from Catholic Relief Services delivered a graphic presentation of the situation in Darfur. Our parish began action involving letter writing and advocacy with our legislators in Washington. Representative Jean Schmidt (Congressional District 2) attended our forum and returned to Washington to be a voice in Congress for the refugees in Darfur. With support of other Ohio legislators, bills were passed approving aid money and pressure on the Sudanese government to stop the violence. Many parishioners from IHM and 26 other parishes in Cincinnati worked together to pressure our government to work for peace in Darfur. Over the year, social ministries posted articles in the bulletin and Heartbeat urging parishioners to get involved to help Darfur.

We joined with the other advocates for Darfur in April to participate in a prayer service at the Greater Cincinnati Islamic Center. Over 300 people of all faiths attended to pray for a change in the terror in Darfur. Many faith communities had prayer services throughout the Cincinnati area. IHM joined our voices with others by praying the rosary every Sunday for Darfur and including prayers from the Adoration prayer group.

Social Ministries Commission joined the Greater Cincinnati Advocates for Darfur in special education presentations over the summer of 2006 and in the Five Days for Darfur events at the end of September. The Five Days for Darfur included fund raising for food relief, legislator call-in day, education events for exhibits and films throughout Cincinnati, joining in with an arts parade, and coordinating an educational DVD presentation for local high schools. During the week, Darfur was spotlighted in TV, radio, and print media as an issue of concern for Cincinnati.

Volunteers have continued work in high schools, work places and organizations to keep Darfur in the public mind. Nick Clooney, local TV personality, has assisted with speaker presentations and events.

A Weekend of Prayer for Darfur was observed on Dec. 9 and 10, with IHM hanging a sign of support for the people of Darfur and remembering them in special intercessory prayers. Dec. 8 marked the 58th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human



Group with Nick Clooney

Rights and the Genocide Convention at the United Nations. With our prayers and support, we spoke as a parish that the world cannot sit idly by and let the people of Darfur suffer.

Unfortunately the news from Darfur has not improved. Refugees continue to flee the area and violence has spread to neighboring Chad. Aid workers from various international relief agencies have had to leave, and food is in very short supply. Women are still being raped and children killed. Medical and schooling needs are being barely met. Villages and crops are ruined.

Recently, the US government has made demands that Sudan must accept UN peacekeepers or face unspecified steps by the US next year. By the time you read this article, we pray that there will be positive changes and better news from Darfur.

Even if change happens, many lives have been lost and villages devastated. The terror of the years spent in living with genocide will not heal quickly. Darfur and Africa face many years of recovery from wars and violence. We must join together to send our prayers and our aid to our brothers and sisters in Darfur and all of Africa.

For information on how you can help, please go to [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org) or the archdiocese Social Action Office website: [www.catholiccincinnati.org/socialaction/](http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/socialaction/)

Or contact IHM Social Ministries Commission, Sue Keefe or Sherrie Heyse.

## 'Songs of Zion' CD

(Continued from page 2)

I guarantee the song's melody will sneak up on you, and you'll catch yourself humming it throughout the day.

One of the most moving and beautifully rendered songs, "I Stood on the Banks of Jordan," is not at all what the title suggests. It's about the loss of one's mother and the hope of reunion. Anyone whose mother has died will find the lyrics and yearning tempo of this song comforting.

No decent CD of spiritual music would be complete without one really good amen-alleluia selection, and "Revive Us Again" is it. This is the only song without a soloist, but it doesn't need one. The chorus of male and female singers does such a powerful job with the succession of six ascending alleluia's followed by "Revive us again," that you'll feel unburdened and revved up each time you listen to it. The only downside is that the song is short, which means you'll likely push the repeat button to hear it twice.

The piano is the sole musical accompaniment on the CD, and it frames and highlights the voices of the vocalists and chorus perfectly. Wylie Howell plays the piano with feeling and depth. You know who Howell is, if you attend the 6 p.m. Mass. He plays the piano at the Mass frequently. Howell said the "Songs of Zion" CD was recorded to celebrate the 160th anniversary of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in the West End.

The only negatives of the CD are the few places where the female vocalists sound a tad screechy. I found this briefly at the beginning of the second song, "Sweet Sweet Spirit," but overall their voices are rich and moving and memorable. This is especially true in "My Help Comes from the Lord." After hearing it the first time, I wanted to yell "Bravo!" I had a more difficult time connecting with the voices of two of the male vocalists. They seemed to break the flow and feel and mood of the rest of the CD, but you may like their two selections just fine.

In the end, listening to spiritual music should make you feel closer to God. The "Songs of Zion CD" succeeds in doing just that.

\$20 (To order, call St. Joseph's Church, 381-4526.)



Women in a refugee camp waiting for supplies

# Recovery Offered For Troubled Marriages

BY DICK AND MARY MCCONN

The Retrouvaille program is backed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Family Life Office for those in hurting or troubled marriages. "Retrouvaille" is a French word that may be translated as "rediscovery."

Marriage is a sign of God's love for His Church.

We often don't realize how our marriage affects the church and society at large. It's an obligation to have the best marriage possible to serve the Church and to improve society.

As married couples we are so caught up in careers, raising children, caring for elderly parents, that we sometimes fail to give attention to our most important one who is closest to us, duty to our spouse. We sometimes need a reminder of our priorities and our commitments. One way to do that is to experience a program called Retrouvaille.

Priests and counselors often recommend that couples start with this peer-to-peer ministry. It is a ministry led by married couples who are recovering from their own troubled relationships. They are aided by priests who present the theological and philosophical bases for Christian marriage. (Note: Retrouvaille is a Catholic sponsored program open to all faiths.) It is a process much like some are familiar with the "12 step" program and is designed to help an increasing number of marriages and families remain whole.

Retrouvaille is a confidential program. Attending couples are not expected to reveal their problems or issues.

The program, founded in French Canada, is about 30 years old. It is now available in most dioceses of the United States and many countries throughout the world.

The process consists of a weekend away (Friday night through Sunday evening) at a retreat center or hotel, with presentations by three "recovering" couples and a priest. The attending couples also commit themselves to participate in the six follow-up meetings scheduled on Saturdays over a three-month period.

The weekend phase is a series of in-depth presentations. Techniques of communication that enable a couple to take a good look at most areas of their relationship are presented.

Retrouvaille focuses on key problem areas in marital relationships. It provides ways for couples to place and keep their individual, marital and spiritual needs in balance. It gives the couple the opportunity to examine their lives together in a new and positive way. The couples will not be asked to share their problems with

anyone else. However, they are encouraged to put the past behind and start "rediscovering" one another.

## Why Couples Attend

Women are often the first to sense trouble. Men usually deny any problem and postpone any search for help. Half the inquiries about Retrouvaille are from women who are concerned that their husbands will not attend. The other half are from men who may have been given an ultimatum by their wife who is about to separate or has already moved out. Men are particularly reluctant to bring their problems to a counselor, but when they learn that the weekend process "will not put them on the spot," they lose the fear of not being in control of the agenda and sign on.

The married couples in any Retrouvaille program represent all the crisis stages familiar to therapists. Young couples who have not "established" a marriage in the first two years could very well find themselves sitting with older couples stuck in such stages as the mid-life crisis or the empty-nest syndrome. In other words, couples married for any length of time and in any crisis or problems attend the program.

"When I, Dick, was first married, I shared facts only with Mary. I thought I was communicating fully, but I was not. I was frustrated, angry and hurt. The Retrouvaille program helped me to communicate on a deeper level with Mary."

"I, Mary, was scared and frustrated and avoided Dick and gave my love and attention to the children. I was going my separate way prior to our Retrouvaille program."

## Who Should Try It

The weekend is helpful for Couples who have experienced a breakdown in their communication,

Couples whose marriage has become unloving and uncaring or whose relationship has grown cold and distant,

Couples who are thinking of separation or divorce or are separated or divorced, but want to try again,

Couples who want to rediscover their loving relationship, but are unable to do so on their own.

Some comments by participants: "We came to Retrouvaille thinking nothing would work, but it was the first time we really faced our problem as a couple and began to work on our marriage together. We have been given another chance as well as a deeper and clearer insight into human love."

Another comment was "Retrouvaille hasn't eliminated our problems or concerns, but has given us tools to work with. It has given us a better understanding of each other and the maturi-



Heritage Committee members include Kitty Tallarico, Elaine Hayhow, Anne Marie Wolfer, Judy Chandler, Mary Ann Thomas, Jo DeSalvo, Bob Gallagher, and Roger Klug

# Heritage Luncheons at IHM

BY MARY ANN RIES

Over the past several months, many seniors have come together once a month for lunch. The luncheons are a wonderful time to gather with old and new friends. We have a committee that has planned each luncheon and prepared some of the food. We have had several guest speakers following the luncheon, these would include Fr. Jan, Fr. Howard, Marge English and ShopSmart.

In December, Julie Spangler from the Cincinnati Pops played the piano while we all sang our favorite Christmas songs. Sr. Carole Temming and John Leyendecker lead us in song, as did our day school co-principals, Mary Hedger and Nancy Goebel, along with Debbi Hill and Jayne Simms.

In January, our co-principals were our guest speakers, letting us know what is going on in the school. We have many wonderful things planned for upcoming months! If you would like to join us for future luncheons, please call the parish office for details.



Sr. Carole and John Leyendecker sing their favorite carols

ty to talk things out instead of just fighting."

Some of you probably know or remember Fr. Ray Favret. He has been instrumental in bringing and continuing the program over the last 18 years in the Archdiocese.

No couple is ever denied the chance to heal and renew their marriage because they face financial difficulties. This concern should not influence your decision to come to Retrouvaille. On the weekend, you will be asked to make an anonymous donation to help

lighten our expenses. The donation covers the expenses of the weekend and follow up sessions. A non-refundable fee is requested when you register for the program to confirm your food and lodging.

The next scheduled weekends are May 18-20 and Sept. 21-23. To obtain more information, call or write Retrouvaille, 4166 Lakeknoll, Mason, OH 45040 or call (513) 398-3137 or 1-800-470-2230 or the web at [www.retrouvaille.org](http://www.retrouvaille.org)

# 2007/2008 Parish Day School Registration

BY DEBBI HILL

Enrollment for the 2007/2008 year at Immaculate Heart of Mary School are in full swing.

Our parish school offers grades one through eight, with three homerooms per grade level. Each homeroom has a typical class size of 25 to 30 students. Educational assistants are available as well as resource teachers.

We are very proud that the first time we applied Immaculate Heart of Mary was named a U. S. Department of Education 2004 Blue Ribbon School.

We expect to accommodate all active parishioners who wish to enroll their child in first grade for next fall. It is important, however, that all registration materials be received in the school office by the end of the appropriate registration week.

Registration packets will be available beginning Jan. 28 at the Open House or parents can stop by the School Office 7:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday after that date. Another option is to visit the school website at [www.ihomschool.org](http://www.ihomschool.org). All forms are available at the site and parents will also be able to see the various other grade level sites, the monthly principals site and the weekly newsletter.

Completed registration packets may be brought to our school office after Jan. 28. Deadlines for registration are listed below.

## Week of Feb. 4

Current Immaculate Heart of Mary School students and their siblings

## Week of Feb. 11

Parish families with new students whose siblings have graduated from Immaculate Heart of Mary School and whose parents have remained active parishioners

## Week of Feb. 18 (Note: School building is closed Feb. 19)

Children of parish families who will be enrolling for the first time in Immaculate Heart of Mary School

## Week of Feb. 25

Children whose families are parishioners at another Catholic Parish which does not have a school with the agreement of their pastor to pay the parish subsidy

Registration for children of non-parishioners

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish is committed, through its school ministry, to developing the personal, academic, and spiritual growth of each child within an atmosphere of care and concern. Our parish's priests, administration, faculty and staff's commitment to your children's well-rounded development is evidence of this dedication.

If parents have any questions please call Debbi Hill, Admissions Administrator, at 388-3020.



Pat Rice and Karen Easley, nurse

## Flu Shots Given to IHM Teachers and Staff

SUBMITTED BY SR. CAROLE TEMMING

We are grateful to Mercy Hospital Anderson for providing the vaccine and administering the flu shots to the teachers and staff at IHM.

## Congrats!

Congratulations to the following students who achieved first and second honors for the first quarter of the 2006-2007 academic year!

### St. Xavier High School

First Honors: Andrew Crowley, Nicholas Crowley, Matthew Filak, Eric Imhoff, Steven Imholt, Brady McDonough, Thomas McGee, Christopher McGee, Matthew Nienhaus, Alexander Rinehart, Brian Roche, Nicholas Shaffer, Brendan Sullivan, Thomas Uebel, Brian Vorwald, Kevin Wilhelm;

Second Honors: Andrew Filak III, Michael Flannery Jr., Matthew Flemer, Samuel Imbus, Christopher Logeman, Jonathon McHale, David A. Weber, Spencer West, Daniel Wohleber.

### St. Ursula Academy

First Honors: Lauren Acton, Katherine Berno, Annelise Blatt, Kaitlin Blatt, Kelsey Cornish, Kathryn Deye, Laura Freking, Kristin Griesel, Jennifer Head, Lauren Head, Erin Hecht, Jenna Ionna, Alyssa Kleespies, Stephanie Kroeger, Elizabeth Leugers, Katelyn Liming, Kathleen Mideli, Morgan Milano, Lisa Piacitelli, Paige Rinehart, Julie Scherer, Cynthia Schmidlin, Keara Sherman, Jillian Wahlbrink, Samantha Washburn;

Second Honors: Paige Cordano, Katelyn Curran, Kristen Dawe, Jennifer Freking, Chelsea Haack, Kristin Haack, Kathleen Kraeutler, Margaret Kroeger, Alissa Lehn, Christine Mideli, Elizabeth Moore, Christine Pettit, Jordan Powers, Anna Sherman, Jayna Stenger, Margot Whitney.

### Covington Latin School

First Honors: Daniel Carroll, Dan Russ.

# Parish Day School Announces Awards

BY DEBBI HILL

All fifth through eighth graders are eligible for the Christian Student Award. While at school nominees must demonstrate an active living of the Golden Rule and Gospel teachings. This award may only be received once each school year. Students who received this award for the first trimester are:

David Berno, Annie Bloemer, Mark Boehm, Mike Clark, Cameron Corbin, Sarah Cornell, Maggie Dames, Molly Day, Matt DeJesus, Ian Grotton, Taylor Haack, Justin Harris, Donovan Herbert, Allison Hickman, Matthew Jenkins, Stephanie Krusling, Teddy Mayer, Gannon McHugh, Nicole Moser, Kelsey Mueller, Chappell Otto, Ryan Pachuta, Christopher Ray, Nick Suckow, Tara Sullivan, Grant Tore, Gretchen Weber, Jacob Woeste.

All fifth through eighth graders are eligible for the Effort Award which honors students who have shown extra effort during the trimester. Students are nominated by their teachers. Students may only receive this award once each school year. Students who received this award for the first trimester are:

Max Becker, Sam Becker, Mackenzie Corbin, Katie Cornell, Alex Enders, Sami Enders, Olivia Fitzpatrick, Sammy Gabbard, Haley Homan, Angel Jenkins, Hallie Jenkins, Stephanie Krusling, Nicole Latreille, Ben Liming, Sarah Lott, Marguerite McMahan, Lauren Merk, Zachary Miner, Jonathan Monsey, Alexander Ray, Andrew Rudolph, Blake Schmidt, Matt Schneider, Alex Shaffer, Tara Spurlock, Joshua Vestring, Emily Wesselkamper, Elise Whitesell, Megan Wolfer, Chris Zapanta.

Join us for a  
Beautiful Evening of Music and Prayer  
Annual Lenten Concert and  
Parish Reconciliation Service



March 29, 2007  
Concert at 7:00 p.m.  
Reconciliation Service  
at 7:30 p.m.

# Resolve to Support Food from the Heart

BY BARB AREND-HENDRICKS

Still need a good New Year's resolution? One upon which you can truly *deliver*? How about one that can still involve lots and lots of food?

Well, IHM parishioners Harry and Pat Manton may have the perfect resolution for us all. They suggest making monthly donations to IHM's Food from the Heart collection. (You may know this long-time ministry under its previous name, Heart-to-Heart.) The Mantons, who have been involved in this ministry for nearly three years and who recently took over heading it up, say it's quick and easy.

First, go to your calendar and draw a heart as a reminder on the third weekend of every month for all of 2007. Then, when each of those dates arrives, take along to Mass some nonperishable food, cleaning supplies, paper products, baby food/formula, disposable diapers or personal care products (soap, toothpaste, etc.). Drop these items in the wooden bins stored in the closets to the left side of the gathering space, and consider your resolution a success for another whole month! While celebrating your follow-through on at least one New Year's resolution, your heart should also feel good knowing the donations are helping needy families right in our community.

Food from the Heart contributions are delivered each month by IHM volunteers to the SEM Food Pantry located at 6446 Beechmont Avenue in Mt. Washington. The overall SEM organization, which stands for Southeastern Ecumenical Ministry, was formed in 1966. According to its website ([www.sem-communities.org](http://www.sem-communities.org)), SEM was formed when "congregations from nine different denominations of churches met to discuss the possibility of working together to provide programs for those whose needs were not being met by other agencies."

SEM ministers to those in need in Mount Washington and Anderson Township through the food pantry and also provides housing for low-income and disabled people at a number of residential facilities. IHM donations go not only to the food pantry but also to residents of one of those facilities, SEM Manor. (See the website for more information

February 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	♥
♥	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

on SEM housing.)

The SEM Food Pantry, in particular, "was established in 1982, when the Rev. Michael Brandy, Pastor of the Mt. Washington Baptist Church and a member of the SEM Pastoral Staff, asked that SEM establish a central facility to serve the needy of the area, and one that could serve the referrals made by the SEM community churches." Therefore, instead of each local church working on its own, "[t]his centralized service has helped eliminate fraud and unnecessary duplication of records, storage space and services."

Untiring 87-year-old Irma Flickner, who began working nearly 28 years ago at what became the SEM Food Pantry, remembers when it operated out of a small room in the Mt. Washington Presbyterian Church. She says the number of people in need has grown tremendously.

Quoting SEM records for 2006, she said, "In September we served 233 families. In October, it was 236 families. And, in November, it was 316 families." She added that, in terms of total individuals, November's figure was 1,052.

Individuals and families served by the SEM Food Pantry must meet eligibility requirements. If those are met, Irma explained, "I tell them to pay their rent

and utilities first and come in for help with food and other goods, if they can't make ends meet."

A typical family served by the pantry leaves with over \$100 worth of food, diapers, etc. each month. SEM Food Pantry also provides cash for rent and utilities—these funds come from specific donations for that purpose. They also provide some assistance for medication.

Because the SEM Food Pantry relies heavily on IHM and other local faith communities to keep its shelves stocked, it is important that the community provides a consistently strong supply of food and other goods. A typical month's contribution from IHM parish is approximately one van load. This past Thanksgiving and Christmas, however, saw very generous increases in the amount of donations from our parish—more than twice the usual amount.

IHM contributions "are always above and beyond the call of duty," according to Irma. "Thank everyone for their wonderful donations."

IHM parishioners should rightfully be proud of our efforts. Still, isn't it tempting to wonder how much more impact we could have if our monthly donations kept the holiday spirit throughout the year?

And there are other ways we can contribute. In addition to the IHM volunteers who already deliver parish donations to the SEM Food Pantry and who help stock shelves there, SEM is also in need of volunteers who, as Irma puts it, "have a van and a good back" to make trips to bigg's and the FreeStore to supplement the donations. Monetary contributions are also gratefully accepted.

For more information, please contact Harry and Pat Manton. If you aren't already a regular contributor and you have the means to do so, please resolve to help others in our area through monthly Food from the Heart donations in 2007. And good luck on all of your New Year's resolutions!

## Elizabeth Ministry Energized for 2007

BY AMY ZIMMERMAN

Since its humble beginnings in January 2003, IHM's Elizabeth Ministry has steadily grown its volunteer ranks, the number of parishioners it has served and the services it provides. It is just one of the many active IHM ministries whose mission is to serve the needs of parishioners and provide a welcomed avenue of support.

However, the Elizabeth Ministry has a very specific focus to serve and provide support to women and families during the childbearing years and the challenges this critical time can often present. After all, the foundation of the ministry is the Visitation Story between Elizabeth and Mary. Elizabeth and Mary provided much needed sisterhood, prayers and support to one another during the shared experience of pregnancy.

The IHM Elizabeth Ministers are a warm, welcoming group of women who give of themselves and their time as volunteer representatives of our

faith community. They are invested in reaching out to others and often share their own experiences with infertility, child birth, still birth and beyond in an effort to bring comfort to others.

The Elizabeth Ministers extend this comfort through a variety of means including but not limited to phone calls, visits, prayer, meal preparation, caring cards, and other general family support. They work diligently to assess what will assist the family and/or woman in need and align the appropriate resources or, if necessary, refer them to another ministry or outside party who may be in a better position to meet their needs.

Throughout 2007, the Elizabeth Ministry will support and participate in a number of parish activities, along with sponsoring opportunities that align with the ministry's mission and the community it serves. In late January, they are co-sponsoring with Right to Life, a special mass to commemorate the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision. Also, twice during the year, they will sponsor masses

during which expectant parents and those who wish to be expecting will receive a special blessing. The Elizabeth Ministry will also participate in the Ministry Fair this coming fall and other charitable events throughout the year that support community outreach organizations such as, The Caring Place, who provide similar support to women and families.

The Elizabeth Ministry team meets once a month in the Guadalupe Room at 7 p.m. to discuss upcoming events, the current parishioners being served and those new parishioners requesting support. It is a great opportunity to have fellowship with other women who are gathering with the intent to serve other women—just as Mary and Elizabeth served each other.

For more information about the ministry, to become a volunteer Elizabeth Minister, or if you know a parishioner who could benefit from the ministry's services, contact Barb Miller or Amy Zimmerman.

## Men's Fellowship Set for March 3

Attention, men and young men of IHM! Come join thousands of Catholic and non-Catholic men for a life-changing day of enrichment, building your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Catholic Men's Fellowship, Inc. of Greater Cincinnati is holding its 13th annual Answer the Call conference at Cincinnati's Music Hall on Saturday, March 3.

We have a great lineup of speakers: **Archbishop Edwin O'Brien** – Archbishop for the Military Services who is the shepherd to the U.S. service men and women, their families and chaplains.

**Senator Sam Brownback** – pro-life supporter from the state of Kansas, elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1994 and to the U.S. Senate in 1996.

**Danny Abramowicz**, a Xavier University alum who played and coached football for the Saints, 49ers, and Bears. Danny, a returning speaker, has done charitable work in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and later moved to Memphis, Tenn., where he has established a Catholic Men's Fellowship movement.

**Jesse Romero** – retired from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, three-time World Police Olympic boxing champion, a USA kick boxing champion and now a full-time evangelist, regular speaker on Catholic radio, frequent guest on EWTN—another returning speaker.

Sign-up sheets will be available after all the Masses in the coming weeks so we can purchase a block of tickets, ensuring all the men will be sitting together at the conference. The cost is \$35, which covers your admission ticket and lunch. Plans are being solidified to provide bus transportation from IHM to Music Hall and back. IHM contacts for Answer the Call are Steve Feller at 232-0487 or Steve Fortin at [steve.fortin@lfg.com](mailto:steve.fortin@lfg.com).

Watch for more information in parish bulletin announcements or visit the Catholic Men's Fellowship website at [www.thecall.org](http://www.thecall.org).

### The Sacraments of Initiation in Easter Time

#### First Communions

April 29 at 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.

May 5 at 3:00 p.m.

May 12 at 3:00 and 5:00 p.m.

#### Confirmation

May 4 at 7:30 p.m.



*IHM Cadette Troop #543 walking the Labyrinth*

## Pattern with a Purpose: Labyrinth at IHM

BY CLAUDETTE OVERLEY

Did you know Immaculate Heart of Mary Church has a Labyrinth? Not many parishioners do. The Labyrinth can be found in front of the church just outside the front doors. If you look closely, you can see different colored bricks that create a square like pattern or path. The entrance is on the school side of the labyrinth.

What is a labyrinth? It is an ancient design found in many cultures throughout the world. There is a labyrinth at the Milford Spiritual Center that was modeled by the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France. The Chartres labyrinth dates from 1221. Medieval Christians customarily made pilgrimages to Jerusalem or Rome. The Chartres Cathedral was one of these major cathedrals. The pilgrims completed their journey by walking the labyrinth. The center of the labyrinth represented the New Jerusalem, the final destination of all Christians. A labyrinth, in contrast with a maze, is unicursal: one path leads to the center and that same path also leads back to the entrance. There is no right way or wrong way to walk it.

The labyrinth is a relaxing way to meditate, pray, say the Rosary or just have a moment of peace. It is a watering hole for the spirit.

Think of your walk as three stages: Releasing: let everything go, clear your thoughts, reduce stress, the mind quiets. Receiving: receiving peace, the Holy Spirit, healing and a sense of being. Returning: spiritual, reflective, relaxed, relieved, and at peace.

Labyrinths remind us to slow down.

I introduced the labyrinth to my Girl Scout Troop the winter of 2005 during a retreat. They realized quickly how the labyrinth could make you feel. In fact, sometimes when we have a retreat or meeting, the girls will ask to walk the labyrinth. Even if it is 40 degrees outside! They say it brings them closer to God, they feel the presence of the Holy Spirit, and they feel at peace.

Last January during my "A Time for Me Retreat" (women's Christ Renews His Parish alumni) I introduced the labyrinth, located at the Milford Spiritual Center, to the ladies. They came away feeling the same way my scouts did.

Here are some suggestions for walking the labyrinth: Take a few deep breaths and begin your journey with an open heart. Follow the path and at each corner stop and reflect, pray, etc. This is where you come to know your inner self. As you continue on the path, if you encounter another person who has stopped, go around them quietly. If you meet someone coming toward you, the way you negotiate the space is how you may encounter people in everyday life.

Go as fast or as slow as you wish. When you get to the center, stop, close your eyes and be aware of your feelings. Let your inner wisdom speak to you. Turn around and take the journey back to the entrance. Reflect.

Next time you go to church, take a look at the "pattern with a purpose." If you see someone standing in or around the labyrinth, it may not be they are waiting for someone, but they are on a journey to release, receive and return.

## What's a Relationship? And, What's in It?

BY STEVE GREEN

Have you ever given thought to what it takes to build a good relationship? This thought entered my mind several months back and I started to search deeper inside as to who I am.

I've read and heard many times over that what you need is a closer relationship with God. That sounds real good but, hey, I pray and go to Sunday Mass and I even squeeze in an occasional Saturday confession. So where does a relationship with God come in?

Time to search a bit deeper. I grew up serving at Mass in my younger days, studied a bit in catechism classes, struggled in my teen years with God and skipped out on church for a time. I checked out other types of religious teachings and eventually decided that I felt my best in a Catholic environment.

So where is this relationship I keep hearing about? I've prayed even though I was away from the church and I can feel there have been times when God has been active in my life, but what's this stuff about relationship?

Search time again. Who is it that I have an actual relationship with? There is the relationship with my wife, children, grandchildren, friends and even the family dogs. So where is my relationship with God?

Relationships are developed over time and with some type of commitment. Relationships can be built through a work and play environment or a time commitment of some kind. However, every good relationship involves some type of communication. I found out the same is true with God when it comes to a good relationship.

I started to spend time with God in and through Eucharistic adoration. It was only an hour once a week, but I actually started talking to God. Yep, you heard me, I started talking with God. Not "Our Father" this and "God help me" with that. I started saying things like, "Okay, Jesus, if we are going to have a relationship, you are going to have to help me here."

There were no sounding gongs or lights flipping on and off but there was a start to a relationship. All of the time I thought I had logged as time for God was to make me feel like I was doing what was right. I'm learning God doesn't work that way.

A relationship with God is just like building a relationship with anyone else: you've got to commit and allow time for the relationship to grow.

Re-introduce yourself to God. Say hello and let God know what you are thinking about. You can even disagree with God and the world will still go on. God wants a relationship with you just as much as you need one with Him.

Take a step on the wild side because we all need good friends, and who could ask for a better friend than God.

## A Way of Life Full of Blessings

BY SALLY SCHRODER

For decades, my life was a dry desert. On the surface, it looked like I was flourishing but I felt insecure and stressed, rudderless in a secular sea.

Today, my cup is overflowing. As I have offered my God-given talents here at Immaculate Heart of Mary parish the past six years, I have experienced a joy and peace that I didn't know existed on earth. By opening my heart to Jesus, I have been offered a life of abundance.

A brief history: From a large Catholic family, I attended Catholic grade and high schools. In college, confusion set in which extended into adulthood. Yes, I still went to church every Sunday but I was living by my own rules. Sin separated me from authentic connection.

After I lived through years of a painful marriage and then divorce, my sons moved away with their dad when they were young teens. Not sure I could go on, I remember looking up into a white expanse of sky and crying out loud, "Where are you, God? Do you really exist?"

A friend suggested praying the rosary; I prayed from my heart. A decade here, a decade there.

It was as if Our Blessed Mother gently took me by the hand and began leading me. It came to me that I should go to Saturday morning Mass; I headed for IHM.

In 2001, retiring from teaching, I finally accepted that my unique gifts were effort and perseverance—not exactly dazzling, but for the first time, I thanked God for these gifts. They had gotten me through some tough years. I remember feeling a release, special graces, when I let go of my will and began trying to discern God's will.

Then I made two decisions that transformed my life: I joined Immaculate Heart of Mary parish and told Jesus that, since my life wasn't working with me running it, from now on, He would be the center of my life. An incredible adventure began to unfold.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was my way of putting Jesus first; I went every day. New spiritual friends mentored me. One morning after Mass, Grace Schmidlin said to me, "The Eucharist you just received is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ." I did not know that.

She continued, "Open your heart and ask Jesus to help you believe." Joining her for an hour of adoration for the first time, my personal relationship with Jesus began. It was as if He had been waiting for me for a long time.

That same day, a spiritual friend invited me to consecrate myself to the

Immaculate Heart of Mary. With little knowledge, I chose Maximilian Kolbe's nine-day consecration which has an apostolic component. This made sense as I was discerning how to serve my new parish. One requirement was to make a general confession. Reaching back into my past with the new information I had gained from listening to homilies, Sacred Heart Radio, etc., I now identified sin after sin. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, this tar-like sludge was flushed out of my soul. Pure grace followed.

Soon after, at Mass one Sunday, the Scripture readings seemed to be speaking directly to me. In amazement, I realized that the Holy Spirit was real! I began praying to Him.

For months, a small voice inside of me had been whispering, write, write. Now, it shouted Write! It was the Holy Spirit again but I still didn't recognize Him. Finally, at Deacon Dave Shaffer's encouragement, I penned an article about my adoration experience. Right away, I was asked to coordinate the new Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration ministry. Realizing my inadequacy, I committed to two hours of adoration a week. This was the beginning of "letting go and letting God." This phrase may sound trite but it demands focusing, praying, stepping out of one's comfort zone, and trusting every day.

The PEA committee jelled. Praying the rosary fervently, we also implored the Holy Spirit for His gifts for our parishioners. We gave our hearts and souls to the effort and even discovered talents we didn't know we had. It was exhilarating. To the surprise and delight of parish leaders, hundreds of parishioners signed up!

That was about three years ago, March 19, 2004. Since then, the Immaculate Heart of Mary has led many of us to come to know and love her Son.

Today, as I sit quietly in the chapel in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, I am "at home" with Jesus. I place my burdens at His feet and spend my hour. My wounded heart has been healed and is now filling with love from Jesus' Sacred Heart. You have to experience this mystery yourself; effort and perseverance are all you need. I leave the chapel strengthened to do His work.

Through devotion to the Eucharist and by saying "Yes!" to being a steward of my simple gifts, I am living a life full of blessings. Coming full circle, I now know that God not only exists but He is truly present this very day in the person of Jesus Christ in the most holy Eucharist at Mass and in the reserved Blessed Sacrament in our chapel. He is my dearest friend!

Jesus waited for me; He is eagerly waiting for you!

Call Sally Schroder for more information about adoration.



## Ugandan Students Receive Funds

As part of this year's IHM Empowerment Fund the parish is sponsoring 10 students from the St. Josephine Bakhita high school in Uganda. Each student receives \$240 a year for tuition, copy books, school clothing and three meals a day. The school opened in 2004 to help orphans or children of poor families. Pictured above are students on the soccer team. Since 1988, IHM has allotted one percent of the Sunday collection to the Empowerment Fund to be given to groups and individuals to help break the cycle of poverty. The fund will disperse \$24,000 this year.

Any parishioner interested in personally helping other students by pledging \$15 or \$20 a month, can send donation to the Fr. Richard Kyankaaga, c/o Comboni Missionaries.

## Finding 'The Promised Land' In the Center of San Salvador

BY DANNY BURRIDGE

Yesterday, I had a very nice visit with my friend Padre Luis Salazar, and got to see him in his natural element as well—a truly wonderful experience.

We met at the cathedral in downtown San Salvador to talk about my ongoing quest to attain missionary status here in El Salvador—through the generous support of Padre Luis and his urban parish Maria Madre de los Pobres (Mary Mother of the Poor), as well as Steve Engler and Father Pat Rush of Visitation Parish in Kansas.

After getting ourselves on track with that process over a cup of coffee, as well as catching up on what has been going on in our respective adaptation processes (Padre Luis adapting to a new parish that has a "mystique" that he is only now beginning to understand after having been to the states and visiting the parishes there who have historical relationships with Maria Madre, and me adapting to living in El Salvador), we headed to the place where we would catch the bus to go to Maria Madre to eat lunch.

No sooner had we exited the cathedral and walked through a crowded marked area, did we hear a voice over the commotion: "Padre, Padre!" It was one of Padre's parishioners from his

former parish in Soyapango. This woman operated a small vending booth and obliged us to sit down and drink some water. She and Padre Luis were overjoyed to see one another and commented on how much weight each had gained in the last year. She then sorrowfully told of her aching and overworked body, and how she is only getting by because of her son who recently went to the states. Padre listened attentively and comforted her and encouraged her to keep going: adelante siempre. She was noticeably heartened by the encounter, and sent us on our way, seemingly a new woman.

And that was just the first one. When we got on the bus, Padre saw another member of his former parish. They also exchanged news, stories of friends and family members, and thankful joy at having seen one another. Once we entered La Chacara, the community where the parish of Maria Madre is located, we could not go 10 feet without Padre stopping to talk to someone, or someone stopping him to talk.

We talked to an old man who only had one leg, and diabetes, and lived alone in a tin shack right on the street—but of course just about everyone there lives in tin shacks right on the street.

(Continued on page 11)

# Recognizing Symptoms To Prevent Stroke

By DAVID M. FICKER, M.D.

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States and the leading cause of disability in adults. About 700,000 people each year in this country develop a stroke. On average someone in this country suffers a stroke every 45 seconds.

A stroke is caused when a blood clot blocks an artery in the brain (an

ischemic stroke) or when a blood vessel breaks and there is bleeding in the brain. Most strokes are ischemic strokes and may result from a blood clot that forms in the heart (from an irregular heartbeat) or from a narrowing of the blood vessels in the neck or brain.

An ischemic stroke may be preceded by transient ischemic attacks or TIA. A TIA is caused by a temporary blockage of a brain blood vessel and may be an indicator of an impending stroke. In both types of stroke, the brain cells are not able to get oxygen and die resulting in loss of normal functions of the brain. A stroke is also called a "brain attack" indicative of the emergency nature of a stroke.

The symptoms of stroke depend on the part of the brain affected. Common symptoms include sudden onset of weakness or numbness in the face, arm or leg, slurred or difficulty with speech, loss of vision, loss of coordination or balance or sudden severe headache with no known cause. A stroke is a medical emergency and requires an evaluation in an emergency room as soon as possible after the

One of the goals of the Health Commission is to offer educational programs to parishioners and the community regarding health issues. One way the commission decided to accomplish this goal is to submit an article to HeatBeat on health topics. Currently the commission is identifying the topic and a commission member writes the article. Please contact Sr. Carole or a member of the commission if there is a topic you would like published. Additionally other Health Commission goals include visiting the sick and homebound of the parish and providing intergenerational connections to strengthen the unity of the parish. If you have any needs or suggestions that you think the commission should be doing, please let a commission member know.

## Act F.A.S.T.

FACE	Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?
ARMS	Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
SPEECH	Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Are the words slurred? Can he/she repeat the sentence correctly?
TIME	If the person shows any of these symptoms, time is important. Call 911 or get to the hospital fast. Brain cells are dying.

onset of symptoms.

There are treatments that may reverse or improve the symptoms of a stroke but most must be given within three hours of onset of stroke symptoms. In the emergency room, a CT scan is performed to determine if the stroke is ischemic or hemorrhagic. In addition, an electrocardiogram (EKG) is performed to measure the heart beat and blood work is done. If someone with an ischemic stroke meets certain criteria, a drug can be given to dissolve the blood clot that caused the stroke. If you think someone is having a stroke, the following simple tests can be done (act F.A.S.T.):

Up to 80 percent of strokes are preventable by reducing and treating the risk factors for stroke, however, some risk factors for stroke cannot be changed. These risk factors include

older age, male gender, family history of stroke and a prior history of stroke. Risk factors that can be modified to reduce stroke include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, cigarette smoking, diabetes, atrial fibrillation (irregular heart beat), other heart disease (including coronary artery disease, peripheral artery disease), obesity and physical inactivity. If you have any of these risk factors, discuss with your health care provider how they can be treated to prevent stroke. In some cases, your physician may recommend you take an aspirin every day to prevent stroke.

Additional information about stroke can be found at the National Stroke Association ([www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org)) and the American Stroke Association ([www.strokeassociation.org](http://www.strokeassociation.org)) websites.

## The Few, The Proud Who Practice NFP

By MARK MARISKA

When most people read that slogan they instantly think Marine Corps. The flag-raising on Iwo Jima. The tough-as-nails drill sergeant barking orders at young recruits. Courageous young men and women pushing themselves that extra mile for the good of each other, the Corps, and their country.

That same slogan also aptly fits some of us in the Catholic Church. Couples that practice Natural Family Planning account for only three to four percent of Catholic couples in the church today – the few. My wife Mary and I haven't always been counted in this group. While not fresh out of "boot camp," we have only been practicing NFP for four and half years now. We have used NFP to successfully avoid pregnancy and also to conceive our third and fourth children.

We were not easy recruits either. Mary heard about NFP much earlier than I did, but passed over the material because she had a lot of unfounded misconceptions. It wasn't until after the birth of our second child that we thought we needed some form of birth control. I didn't want Mary to go back on the pill and I was also very uncomfortable about any permanent options.

Mary was the first to visit some of the "recruiters" of NFP. With her scientific background, it took a lot to convince her of the accuracy and reliability of the methods of Natural Family Planning. In order to enlist, however, she had to convince me. I was no easy sell on the program. You see, after a nine-year stint in the U.S. Navy, I knew what NAVY really meant – Never Again Volunteer Yourself. After many months of discussion, however, I

relented and went to get all the facts from the recruiter. I had doubts after we "enlisted," but we both came to realize that this was the right path for our marriage.

I'm proud of my wife for her courage to challenge her prior convictions. I'm proud of her tenaciousness to change not only my mind, but my heart. I'm proud of the challenging path we've taken. It has been a very liberating journey for us both and one that has driven us to share our experience with others.

I know that many of you may feel that you don't have the courage to change, to talk with your spouse, or to take that leap of faith. Change is hard, but we all know that everything that is worthwhile has a cost. Is NFP worth it? In my opinion, it is priceless. My marriage is stronger than I could have ever imagined and I believe it has made my family stronger. Don't just take my word for it; studies of couples using NFP have consistently shown a divorce rate of less than five percent.

We're looking for a few good men and women to join us Sunday, Feb. 25, at 2 p.m. in Hageman Hall. Look for the announcements in the church bulletin and register with the parish office so we can save you a seat. At least come to hear what the "recruiters" have to say – it may change your life, your faith and, most importantly, your marriage. Be all you can be...you have the courage within you.

## Finding 'The Promised Land'

(Continued from page 10)

But this man could not stop holding onto Padre Luis's arm as they spoke and shared. Padre laid his hand on the man's head, said his goodbyes and we moved on.

We went past rabid dogs in the street, which Padre managed to steer me clear of. We saw the wall on one side of the street literally crumbling as workers on the hill above made a levee type of structure to try to mitigate possible landslides. We saluted the bare-foot children walking and playing in the street. And everyone smiled and said hello as Padre passed. We talked to another woman who was limping along with a swollen foot, and a nasty open gash on her big toe that she had covered with the strap of her sandal. She raspily explained to us how she was waiting for money to come from her husband in the states so that she could go and get her foot checked out. Padre told her to come to the clinic at the parish the next day and get it taken care of - that if she didn't have enough money then, she could pay it later. She seemed visibly relieved. If there were a few common threads that ran through La Chacara, they seemed to be that everyone had some type of ailment that wasn't being taken care of properly, and that they had family

**Baptisms**

October 2006

Elizabeth Eileen Corder, daughter of Nicholas and Christine

Jack Andrew Corder, son of Nicholas and Christine

Brendan Doyle Mullin, son of Stephen and Tricia  
Sydney Rose Hardesty, daughter of Brent and Renee  
Abigail Jeanne Reupert, daughter of Randy and Andrea

Hailey Elizabeth Barker, daughter of Shawn and Megan

Jason Alexander Garcia, son of Ramiro and Marlene  
Anderson Michael Mescher, son of Charles and ElizabethCaroline Adair Wilson, daughter of Robert and Tami  
Leo Maximilian Tombragel, son of Gregory and Esther

Brooke Elizabeth Calder, daughter of James and Christina

Grace Kathleen Aman, daughter of David and Karin  
Ryan Walker Hummel, son of Scott and Heather

November 2006

Savannah Marie Bare, daughter of Kenneth and Marilyn

Grace Addison Fowler, daughter of John and Elizabeth

Tomas Coldiron, son of Christopher and Monica  
Robert Owen Jones, son of Robert and Katherine  
Phoebe Marie Henderson, daughter of Stefanie Marie  
George Edward Laake, son of Timothy and Angela  
Lucy Isabella Rudolph, daughter of Scott and Nicole  
John Charles Gruber, son of Jonathan and Elizabeth  
Claire Jean Rieder, daughter of Jeffrey and Shane  
Charlotte Marilyn Hughes, daughter of Jason and SusanAvianna Grace Yun, daughter of Eric and Stacey  
Allison Marie Fox, daughter of Dale and Amy  
Nicholas Emerson Geiser, son of Robert and Catherine

Allison Catherine Tillack, daughter of Lawrence and Melissa

**New Registrations***Immaculate Heart of Mary extends a warm welcome to the following new parishioners. We hope that you will come to find peace and joy as you become active members of our*

**Parish Mission Statement**

*Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish is a Roman Catholic Community centered in the Eucharist. Our mission is to support people in their faith journey, to experience God within a loving community, and to call forth the gifts present in each person as a disciple; living the Gospel of Jesus Christ through word and deed and continuing Jesus' ministry of service to all of God's people through the intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.*

worship community.

October 2006

Jeff Ackel

Brian &amp; Heather Albanese and Kate &amp; Owen

David &amp; Karin Aman and Hannah &amp; Grace

Gloria Gerde

Richard &amp; Jacqueline Glaser and Michael &amp; Abby

Jason &amp; Marcia Heskett and Aramis

David &amp; Vera Hoenie and Jeff, Jo, Quinn &amp; Marianne

John Horstman

Dan Ingram

Virginia Land

Ray &amp; Leslie Mirabella

Mary Kay Prall

Brian &amp; Victoria Richardson and Brianna &amp; Caitlyn

David &amp; Sherry Ritzenthaler and Joshua, Zachary &amp; Emily

John &amp; Melinda Scheper and Brandon &amp; David

James &amp; Carolann Schimanski and Paul, Alex &amp; Peyton

Gregory &amp; Julie Smith and Jake

Fernando Soto and Bryan

Mark &amp; Tracey Stewart and Meghan &amp; Meredith

Aaron Toole and Jacob

Jim &amp; Lee Anne Waldfofle

November 2006

Kate Brodie &amp; Conor

Dennis &amp; Donna Browning

John Danhires

Michael &amp; Brandy Del Favero

John &amp; Judy Fahrmeier and Anna &amp; Elizabeth

Paul &amp; Margie McDole and Tanner, Morgan &amp; Ryan

Paul &amp; Lisa Morey

John &amp; Karen O'Leary and J.C. &amp; Katherine

Ronald &amp; Jacqueline Oester and Josh

Ron &amp; Jill Trabish

Lauren Wulker

December 2006

Robert &amp; Susana Chaves and Daniel &amp; Alex

Paul &amp; Barbara Kaminsky and Ashley &amp; Emily

Evan &amp; Katherine Miller

Leo &amp; Brenda Osterday

Scott &amp; Julie Sheffer and Matt &amp; Kaci

**Departures***Immaculate Heart of Mary bids good wishes and farewell for now to the following parishioners who have left our parish. May our Lord guide you as you join new worship communities and face all of the challenges associated with any change. We shall keep you in our prayers and look forward to the possibility of your future visits or a return to IHM.*

October 2006

Heidi Ackerman

Michael &amp; Maria Ashe

Peter &amp; Colleen Bruemmer

Jeff &amp; Karen Burnham and Kylie &amp; Jessica

Paul &amp; Constance Hackett

Ray &amp; Sharon Kemble

Fred &amp; Elizabeth Morgan and Sara

Curt &amp; Laurie Neth and Lexi, Logan &amp; Lauren

Joan Owens

Paul &amp; Mchelle Schraer and Hunter &amp; Hailey

Robert &amp; Jean Ann Schroer

Edward &amp; Mary Van Dusen and Austin &amp; John

Anthony &amp; Kelly Vickers and Preston

November 2006

Kerin Hayes

Michael &amp; Judy McDevitt and Shannon

Pat &amp; Wendy Oakley and Jacob

Todd &amp; Sheryl Palmer and Kate, Jillie &amp; Elle

Mary Sunderman

December 2006

William &amp; Jill Bohl and Gina &amp; Bryan

Michael &amp; Linda Byrnes and Katie

Craig Davis

Marty &amp; Rosa Melerine and Marty &amp; Daniel

Steve &amp; Sue Surovec and Liz, Steve &amp; Abby

**HEARTBEAT**A publication of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish,  
7820 Beechmont Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45255

Phone: 388-4466

Pastor: Fr. Jan K. Schmidt

Editor: Elizabeth Bookser Barkley

Advisor: Leisa Anslinger

Designer: John Nagy

Typist: Jayne Simms

Production: Rick Barr

Published four times a year

Next deadline: Jan. 2 by noon to the parish. The next issue will be mailed to homes in early February.

All submissions are subject to editing. To be considered for publication, articles may be sent via e-mail as a Word document to parish@ihom.org or submitted to the parish office on a 3-1/2 inch computer disk accompanied by a hard (printed) copy. All articles must be submitted by deadline. If you do not have access to a computer and wish to sub-



Immaculate Heart of Mary School was chosen as a 2004 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School 1955-2005 50 Years of Catholic Education

Immaculate Heart of Mary School is fully accredited through the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish received the 1999 Mustard Seed Award from the National Association of Parish Catechetical Directors for commitment to family and parental involvement in religious education.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Social Ministries Commission received a 2001 Archdiocesan Pentecost Award.

mit an item, please submit a legible copy by the deadline with a request on the outside of the envelope: "Submission to be typed for HeartBeat."

members in the states that were helping them to barely scrape by.

We soon stopped in a little house and sat down with three women and a small army of young girls. In that house, we laughed and joked like it was our sole purpose on earth. These women, and Padre Luis with them, were so full of life and joy that I couldn't help but be taken along with them, to a higher level of consciousness of God, and of the good in the world.

It is often hard for us to understand how the poor can be so full of happiness, but I think it has to do with their gratitude. They are thankful for food, for shacks on the street, for their friends, for family, and for people coming to visit them. They are thankful for life, something that we all too often take for granted. Even when one of the women began talking about a group of families that she knew that were forced out of their houses in a different zone by the extortion of gang members, it was followed by bouts of hearty laughter when she added that the families had heard that they could get free housing in La Chacara—"as if houses materialized out of the dirt here!"

Then the little girls took me out to their back balcony and showed me the tiny 10-square foot cement pool that was down the hill from their house. It was full of little, wet, shouting bodies, and looking down upon it, it was surrounded by aluminum roofs that were held down by rocks, cinder blocks, and pieces of wood. In the distance there were beautiful green hills, and I almost commented on how wonderful of a view they had at their house, but their smiling little faces seemed preoccupied with pride in their pool.

As we crossed the bridge over the contaminated and stinking drainage ditch known as the Acelhuate River, which runs through the center of La Chacara, I commented to Padre, "All the people seemed really happy to see you and to have you come be with them for a little while." He responded "Well, we can't be hypocrites can we?"

I looked back to where we had come through: the crumbling hillside, the tin houses stacked on top of one another, the concrete and dirt, the obese women, drug addicts and alcoholics who had accosted me for money, the little kids playing on piles of slate and rocks, and the smell of garbage and feces permeating everything. And then I had the strangest thought: "Maybe this is the promised land."

## Self-Defense Course Returns to IHM

BY MIKE BEUMER

Debbie Gardner will once again present her Survive seminar at IHM on Wednesday, March 28, in the gym. Debbie first did her program at IHM in the spring of 2005. The information presented was so timely that the Health Commission has scheduled her back.

The evening's program is open to all junior high and high school students and their parents. It is not necessary for parents to attend, but the instruction given is helpful to any age group. The focus will be on survival in a threatening situation.

Debbie offers methods to deal with potential assault. She gives strategies to assess the situation, then respond to the threat. The topic is heavy but the delivery is entertaining and engaging. Participants will go away from the program armed with information to respond to those situations where their belongings and very existence may be threatened.

The evening's program is scheduled from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.. Cost is \$5 per person, maximum \$15 per family.