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40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

October 23, 2008

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

We are in the midst of a perfect October day this afternoon as I am writing this month's newsletter. Today was Father Jones's birthday, and the occasion was celebrated this morning in our Sacred Heart Chapel, and again, a little later in our Dining Hall, with the men singing "Happy Birthday."

Earlier this week, at 8:45 on Monday morning, we received delivery of 35 new windows which are scheduled for installation in the second and third floor of the 'A' Building. For those of you who are perhaps unfamiliar with the layout, or the nomenclature, of our buildings at Unity Acres, 'A' is the three-storey white frame building, with the high-pitched green steel roof, at the southwest corner of our property. It currently houses 17 of our residents. This building was constructed perhaps 70 or 80 years ago, when the Unity Acres property was in operation as the Oswego County Tuberculosis Sanatorium; it was originally known as the Nurses Building. The windows in this building, until now, have been for the most part untouched since the time of the construction of the building. And as the years have gone by, and concerns for energy-efficiency have grown, it has become obvious that these 70 or 80 year old windows were drafty, rattled during strong winds and leaked a lot of heat during the cold winter months.

The new windows set for installation in 'A' Building next week are double hung, tilt-in windows, with thermal panes. Once installed, these windows should enhance the comfort of the men living in 'A' Building for a long time to come. We expect as well to see a reduction in the amount of fuel oil needed to heat the building in question.

Today has been a cool but sunny and dry day, and tomorrow is projected the same, so the work of re-roofing the North Wing (which was announced in last month's newsletter) should be drawing to a close. Incidentally, the North Wing is the long, low, one-storey building on the north side of the driveway

behind our main building, which is called the 'B' Building. It houses the clothing room, and serves as a storage area for a great variety of donated durable goods.

During the last few weeks, our woods have been the site of some increased activity as well. In order to prepare for anticipated expenses in heating our buildings this winter, we had decided to do a timber sale, and have in fact sold approximately 250 trees. These have been cut down, and are being taken out of the woods this week. The lumber company is leaving behind a good quantity of tree tops which will be available to us for use as firewood.

During the first week of September we retired from service the 1987 Pontiac sedan that we had received some years ago as a gift, and which we had been using to transport men to various, mostly medical, appointments, and for running various errands. We had begun to notice that the car had grown increasingly reluctant to start in the mornings, and felt that it would not be very reliable or safe during the winter months to come. We received some very



generous donations during this time which were intended to help us purchase a newer, safer and more reliable vehicle, which we have done. It is a 2006 Chevrolet Impala -- a very comfortable Sedan-type car that will allow us to make travelling to and from the many doctor's offices and clinics to which we bring our residents much more pleasant for all involved. Shortly after putting the Impala on the road, we received the donation of a 1994 Toyota Camry, which increases even

more our ability to coordinate transportation of our residents to appointments and other errands.

The third Sunday of August, was set as usual, for the date of our annual picnic. Every year, the Unity Acres picnic becomes a focus for planning of our activities as menus are set, food donated or purchased and prepared, liturgies planned and so on. The picnic helps us all to think about Unity Acres as a home to which we are inviting our family and friends, and which we wish to present to those friends and family as a well-cared for home. So the buildings, the grounds, the cemetery and the gardens are given meticulous attention in advance of the day of the picnic. Thanks to all of you who came to the Acres for the day. It was good for all of us here to be able to show hospitality to you, and to welcome you as special and honored guests.

On the evening of September 10, as it happens, during calling hours for Art Fikes who had died the previous week, we received word from Vivian Teall Howard Nursing Home in Syracuse, that one of our former residents, Kevin Rook, had been taken to University Hospital. Upon visiting Kevin at the hospital the following afternoon, it was clear that Kevin's doctors were not offering much hope

for any sort of recovery. After having been admitted to University Hospital for 4 or 5 days, Kevin was returned to Vivian Teall Howard, as a palliative care patient, and died there on Saturday, September 20. He was 52 years old. He had been suffering from a serious illness since the early 2000s, so we can be glad that Kevin's sufferings have come to an end. Kevin had first come to Unity Acres during the late 1980s, and for several years Kevin had been one of the team of carpenters responsible for proposing and executing building and maintenance projects here at Unity Acres, and worked out of the carpentry shop that had been established in the basement of the Brick Building. He took a lot of pride in his work, and helped during the course of several years to renovate most of the rooms in the Annex building, working from room to room as they would become vacant.

Kevin's calling hours and funeral were held in our chapel, and his body was laid to rest at our Saint Martin de Porres Cemetery on September 24. Please pray for Kevin's peaceful repose.

Steve Dickhout

### October Prayer: God's Presence--The Chapel

- Psalm 84: 1,4 "How lovely is Your dwelling place, Lord, God of Hosts!... How happy those who dwell in Your house!"
- Psalm 27: 4 We thank You, God, for our chapel: "One thing I ask, this alone I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all my days..." You are present to us in many ways. Help us to know and respond to Your presence in our chapel. Give us faith in Jesus, Your Son, residing in our tabernacle. May we believe in this mystery of faith.
- Psalm 27: 4 "...For one day within Your temple heals. Every day alone..." Let all the lonely, sad or fearful, feel the comfort of your presence here at our home.
- Psalm 27: 4 "O Lord, bring me to Your dwelling!" Let all who come here sense the quiet, patient, welcoming Lord, in our chapel. May we be reverent, but not hesitant to enter this holy place, the Sacred Space.
- Hebrews 10: 22, 23 "We have a great High Priest in charge of God's house. So let us come near to God, with a sincere heart and sure faith... Let us hold firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God...."  
...who dwells in our chapel.

Father Robert Jones