



UNITY ACRES
 P.O. BOX 153
 ORWELL, NEW YORK 13426
 TEL: 315 298-6215
 FAX: 315 298-5356

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

It was a cold and snowy morning in Syracuse on April 10, 2000. I could barely make out the temperature reading flashing on top of the MONY building, I think it was 29 degrees F. The day before I had just concluded a cross country trip from Phoenix, Arizona and was definitely experiencing thermal shock! The wind-breaker I was wearing obviously was not suitable for April in Syracuse. I was standing on the doorstep of the ACC unit at the Rescue Mission where I had

completed the six month program a year ago. I was ashamed to be back there after so many people had invested time and energy in me. I hadn't had a drink in the past five months, but here I am again, my spirit broken. I felt so empty, discouraged and depressed. I could not bear to sit through the program classes at the ACC program again, and left after five days.

My 1990 Olds Cutlass barely started after sitting for five days and apparently did not appreciate this central New York climate. It was spitting and sputtering all the way up interstate 81. God was with me because the car made it into nearby Richland and died. I left it on the side of the road and hiked the last mile to Unity Acres. I knew of the Acres from having been a resident there once in 1997 and again in 1998. I did not stay long either time, but this time would prove to be different. I knew the Acres would accept me just the way I was, and would not ask a lot of questions. Bill Spurrier, being the gracious host that he is, made sure I had everything I needed including a heavier coat! The depression I was suffering was such a demon to battle. My energy level was so low, and I lost interest in things I liked to do. After a few weeks I agreed to do night watch, but did not have much interest in doing anything else. As time went on I learned to live with this disorder. I was always treated with respect at the Acres, even though I felt unworthy of respect. I came to the Acres as I was, and they accepted me. I stayed for six months, which is a long time for me!

I moved out of the Acres and got my own apartment in Oswego. I think that winter we had 192 inches of snow! The warmth of the Arizona sunshine was calling me back. I telephoned my sister Laura in Tucson and she opened her home to me, as she had many times in the past. We would go to church together, and my faith was strengthened and renewed again. For years I thought I was walking alone, now I know the Lord was there by my side, just as I was. I soon landed a good job in Tempe, Arizona and moved to Casa Grande to cut down on what would have been a two hour commute.

One July morning on my way to work I pulled into a rest area along interstate 10 for a coffee to go. I noticed a man sleeping on top of a picnic table. His face was scorched from the sun, his clothes tattered and dirty. I felt for this man and said to myself, "but there for the grace of God go I". I had a cold bottle of water in my car and without waking him I placed the water next to him. I got back into the car and began praying for this man. After the prayer the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart and urged me to work with the homeless. The work I was doing in the electronics field was fine for the world, but had little reward in heaven. Shortly after this experience I began volunteering with a Good Shepherd church group in Tucson serving meals and giving out clothing to the homeless in Tucson. This was good, but I longed to do more. My sister Laura and I prayed about opening a shelter in Tucson. After much prayer the Lord revealed to us there may be a need at Unity Acres. After a month or two of letter and phone correspondence, it was agreed by the staff that I could come to volunteer my time. I drove from Arizona in early May of 2003. Laura was led by her faith and arrived a month later.

Unity Acres will always be a part of my heart. I feel privileged to be able to help where I can. I truly believe part of my calling from the Lord is a combination of being able to give back from what I have received, and doing the work God has intended for me.

The Acres is a place where you can come as you are, and be accepted for who you are.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

Mark Baker

PRAYER - OCT/NOV - AUTHORITY

"Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant;
whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all"
(Mark 10, 44 - 29th Sunday)

"Father, You show Your almighty power in Your mercy and forgiveness.
Continue to fill us with Your gifts of love."
(Prayer -- 26th Sunday)

Dear God, may Your Spirit enlighten us about authority
You are the sovereign God of all creation, help us to obey Your commands.
May we respect and heed those with legitimate authority.

But our world, O God, suffers much from the abuse of power.
Governments, communities, rulers and leaders use it to crush and subjugate
people. Those obsessed with gaining more and more, rule without justice
or compassion. And violence and destruction are its fruit.
May your Spirit touch the hearts of all, that they heed the words of Jesus.
"Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant."
We especially pray for all present and future elected officials in our land.

Jesus, Lord and teacher, You washed the feet of the Apostles.
By this example of humble, loving service, You taught that
we must do the same. Help us to follow Your word and teaching.
Amen.

Father Robert Jones