



UNITY ACRES
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January 15, 2005

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

A heavy blanket of fresh snow is covering everything in sight, the sky is bright blue, the air cold and still. It is a beautiful, peaceful Saturday -- a good day to reflect on the manifold blessings we have received during the last weeks, throughout the past year, and even throughout Unity Acres' 35 year history. A good day to acknowledge that God continues to provide for our needs, through your generosity.

Through more than 35 years, we at Unity Acres have been provided the means to offer nourishing wholesome meals and warm clothing for the men residing with us. We have received the means, through the generous sharing of time, talents, enthusiasm, creativity -- both on the part of men living here and from our many benefactors -- to keep our aging buildings habitable, our vehicles and equipment in running order, our kitchen staffed, supplied with abundant food, and outfitted to serve 70, 80 or meals, as needed, three times a day. We have adequate clean water. Our clothing rooms are full (and indeed overflowing).

We received many Christmas presents that were so thoughtfully selected and sent up to the Acres for distribution to the men on Christmas eve. Additionally, the St Frances Altar and Rosary Society once again prepared a special Christmas party and dinner for the men in mid-December. They have been doing this for close to 25 years! Order of the Eastern Star members have continued their tradition of joining the men for an afternoon of singing and home-made cookies.

The list of the things that we have received and the people who have helped us meet the needs of the men would be long indeed, and space would never suffice in a short newsletter to convey adequately our thanks. But please know that we appreciate the obvious concern, shared by so many, for the needs of our men. We are most grateful--and we are most conscious that it is through you that God is providing for our needs.

Yet we know that there are many, many people throughout the world whose basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, security are going unmet. We have been shocked and saddened at the devastation and loss of life that occurred as a result of the earthquake and subsequent tsunami on December 26. During the days immediately following, a collection for tsunami relief was taken up from the men during mail call. And so, we have elected not to include the usual return envelope to Unity Acres in this month's mailing, but instead, encourage any of our benefactors to consider donating instead to the relief efforts in Southeast Asia, or to any of the other corners of the world where so many men, women and children have so much less than ourselves.

Wishing you all the best in this new year of grace.

Steve Dickhout

January 2005 Prayer: "Thy Will Be Done"

"Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will... to do Your will, o my God, is my delight, and Your law is written in my heart... I announced Your justice in the vast assembly; I did not restrain my lips, as You, o Lord, Know."

—Ps. 40 (Mass of Sunday, Jan. 16)

God of all times and places, we thank you for the blessings of 2004. We ask You to forgive any sins – failure to love – of this last year. And now, o God, we seek Your grace for this New Year. We pray for an end to so much disaster – human-made and natural, and for healing. We pray for ourselves and all people. Give us, o God, the mind and the heart of the Psalmist. Teach us Your will; strengthen us to follow it. May it be our delight! May Your law be written within our hearts. Help us to announce Your justice to the "vast assembly" – all people – by works of justice and peace. Let us not, out of fear, restrain our lips; rather, move us to speak out for the poor, the oppressed, the helpless. Send Your Spirit upon us, Lord, that we might say, from our hearts, and in our lives: "Here I am, Lord, I come to do Your will."

