



UNITY ACRES
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ACTS OF KINDNESS

Some of our newsletters announce the accomplishments and improvements made on our buildings, grounds, or utility related matters. This month I would like to touch on a human element which plays a great role here at Unity Acres. They are true selfless acts of kindness performed by the men that reside here. These acts of kindness set the tone for a more peaceful and harmonious community.

Men who put others above themselves. Men that will trudge through snow and slush to deliver a meal to a brother that is sick. The man performing this deed often ends up at the end of the chow line where the food is not as abundant, or his favorite slice of pie is long gone. Men that will risk injury getting up on a snow covered roof to remove ice, so another man's room will not leak. Men that give of their talents to fix a television, hang a door, build a shelf, lay a floor, for another who does not know how. Men that will put in countless hours in our kitchen so another can have a good meal. Men that will give of their personal possessions to a new man that is in need. Men that will shop at the store for another that is unable to get out. Men that will sit and listen to another who is having a bad day, even though the listener is having a bad day himself. Men that will get up in the middle of the night to fix a furnace so another will be warm. The list of these selfless acts goes on and on. Men that have very little, giving everything they have. These men are the cogs in the wheels that turn this place, the backbone of our operations. Most important of all, these acts of kindness are pleasing to God.

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another as yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

--Romans 12: 10-13

--- Mark Baker

Another month has passed and we still enjoy the cold, wind and snow. Come on spring. All is well at the Acres. We are continually blessed by your gifts and prayers. We are grateful. We ask for your prayers along with ours for our residents who are in the hospital, nursing homes or are recovering from illness or injury.

Unity Acres is a mission of faith. Our trust in the goodness of God to be true to his word and to meet our need, and in this God remains faithful. What is faith, we look in the book of Hebrews (11: 1): "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Now as the body of Christ we are called to walk by faith. In Second Corinthians (5: 7): "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

If we expect to have God show us all that will come our way, that is not faith, that is foolish. True, we may not know what is around the next bend. But how exciting it is, knowing that God has something to show us or teach us. What a blessing it is. If we have no faith we will never grow. Sadly we put more faith in the chair we sit in than the God who loves us. We trust the chair will hold us with no doubt. But God would have us step out in faith, assuring us that he will not let us fall and he will keep us. We spend hours or years debating with God. "Have we lost our minds?" God has not led us this far to abandon us now.

We believe in God's goodness, but lack the faith to trust him. Happily, living at the Acres my faith has grown greater, relying on God for all my needs.

I tell you honestly, God as never let me down. He keeps us all every day. It is as simple as this, either walk in faith and be blessed, or walk by sight and not receive God's full goodness. Faith is not measured by the words you speak, but how you live your life.

We as always pray for you, for your needs and that God will bless you. If you have a need [for our prayers], let us know. Write [to] us, and we will present your request before God in our prayers. And we ask that you will continue to lift in prayer this ministry. Together, we will walk in faith and be blessed. I close with the words of Paul (2 Timothy 4: 7): "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Walk with God, and he will walk with you. Amen.

---Robert 'Bear' Koos

Prayer

"Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart ... rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God." -- Joel 2: 12-13.

O God of love, we have observed the Valentine's traditions, of hearts, flowers, love. We are about to begin another Lenten season. And again You call us to "rend our hearts," to turn from hardness -- hearts of stone -- to love -- hearts renewed at one with You.

It seems that our whole world has turned its back on You -- all of Your commandments, broken, mocked, ignored. Your Gospel is so alien to our society, our times. Yet help us to remember, God, that there is love. There are people who believe in You, who care, who love. Send us Your Spirit, that we may know deeply the lessons of Lent. Help us all to turn back more fully to You -- with all our hearts.

Peter Mamulski 2/1 and Charlie Burden 2/9

“A glad heart lightens the face...” Proverbs 15: 13
This scripture is most fitting for Peter and Charlie

Peter, a former resident of Unity Acres, lived his last days at Sunrise in Oswego. His declining physical health, in contrast to his more active days, was a cross. But whenever we saw him, his smile and chuckle showed us his still buoyant spirit. May he rest in peace. Charlie, also a former resident, lived at Vale Haven in Oswego these past few years. Charlie was a friendly, jovial man, and spoke fondly of the Acres. When possible, he loved to come to the annual picnic. It was a pleasure to visit him. The folks at Vale Haven will miss him, and so will we. Rest in peace, Charlie! May we hear your hearty laugh from Heaven!

Norman Zigenfus

Please also pray for the happy repose of Norman Zigenfus, one of our beloved long-term residents. Norman passed away February 8, 2004 at University Hospital following surgery. Unity Acres has been Norm's home for at least fifteen years, so naturally his wishes were to be laid to rest here. His funeral was at February 12, and was attended by many of his fellow residents. For the past three months, Norm battled cancer very bravely and without any complaint. He had such a peace knowing that his life was in the hands of God. His life was living proof that “He keeps in perfect peace all those whose thoughts are steadfast on Him.” Much appreciation and gratitude to Steve P. and Skip for all the loving care and brotherhood you generously showed Norm. Norm, you will be greatly missed by all.

Carl Nowak

God called our brother, Carl Nowak, to his eternal home on February 19th. Carl, who resided for a while at the Acres, was at the Pontiac Nursing Home in Oswego these past few years. Carl was always friendly and a pleasure to visit. His smile made the visit all the more worthwhile. At his funeral Mass at Unity Acres, February 23rd, 2004, Jesus reminded us, “Everyone whom my Father gives me will come to me” (Jn 6, 37). May Carl rest in peace, having come to Jesus.

Carol Guthrie

On 27 February 2004, after several months of declining health, Carol Guthrie died at St Camillus Nursing Home in Westvale, where she had resided since the latter months of 2002. Carol was one of our stalwart live-in volunteers for many years. Carol came to live at the Acres in 1987 upon retiring from Marine Midland Bank in Syracuse, and spent the many of the subsequent years doing innumerable errands: meeting arriving men at the bus stop in Pulaski, picking up donations of food and other items for the Acres, accompanying men to medical appointments, and so on. She was perhaps best known for her unique gift of hospitality maintaining an ‘open door’ policy in her quarters located in Unity Acres’ main building, meaning that there was always of pot of coffee brewing and a ready welcome for men and visitors to the Acres alike. Carol's many kindnesses to the men, and to the volunteers of Unity Acres, were remembered at her funeral Mass which was concelebrated by Father Jones and Father Arthur Hapanowicz in our Sacred Heart Chapel. This spring, Carol's body will be laid to rest, amongst the remains of men who had become her friends and brothers, in St Martin de Porres Cemetery, along with Peter, Norman and Carl.

Please pray for the repose of Peter, Charlie, Norman, Carl and Carol, and please also pray for the repose of two other long-time friends of Unity Acres who died in February 2004: ROBERT MCVEY and ROBERT C. RODGERS. Robert McVey was the brother of Unity Acres founder Father Raymond McVey. He died in the Syracuse VA on February 4th, and is survived by his sister Betty Zacharek, and aunt Helene Ball. Bob Rodgers, one of Unity Acres' most ardent supporters, died in Syracuse on February 11, and is survived by his sons.