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*Loaves and Fishes*



*Ministries*

**Transitional Housing  
and Services**

Zacchaeus House for women  
with children  
Luke's House for single men

Telephone (517) 482-2099 Fax (517) 482-6848

[loavesandfisheslansing.org](http://loavesandfisheslansing.org)

**August 2012**

## Called to Compassion by Joan Tirak, Core Community Member

*"True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring." ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.*

At a time when most of the world's wealth and resources are in the hands of a very small percentage of people, radical compassion is an absolute for living justly, equitably and peaceably with our sisters and brothers. Jesus of Nazareth walked among people whose lives were totally manipulated by the wealthy power brokers of his day. His solution for his followers was simple and straight forward. He said, "Love as I have loved," then showed by his life of unconditional love and compassion that maintaining humanness is akin to maintaining Godliness. *Both require we help others do more than just survive.*

Unfortunately competition rather than compassion has become a way of life - a principle that many use to absolve themselves from the need to care about others. In fact many have become unscrupulously wealthy on the backs of the poor throughout the world. Case in point: When NAFTA was signed, most businesses scrambled to move their production overseas where they would not have to pay corporate taxes - nor pay their workers wages that would help them to grow out of their poverty. Another shocking example: on June 26<sup>th</sup> National Public Radio reported that one of the big banks whose officers earn billions in annual bonuses, approved a mere 50 cents per hour pay increase over a 5-yr period for those who clean their executive bathrooms. Clearly, the bottom line here is pure profit without even a hint of compassion. Competition - not care of others. How could they possibly believe that they are treating their workers humanly or with dignity? Yet I'm sure they see themselves as 'being good employers'...by their standards. The problem is, of course, that their standards are far from being socially responsible. *If they had the WILL TO TRULY SEE the plight of their workers, then using justice and compassion as a compass, they would make certain these faithful servants have what they need not just to survive, but to thrive.* Imagine the joy that could be theirs, knowing that they helped their workers have a significantly better life!

How does this message apply to us? To you? **Thankfully, because many of you live with compassion as your compass, Loaves & Fishes Ministries has been able to serve thousands of homeless these past 30+ years - making life better for untold numbers.** If those who control the vast majority of the world's wealth took seriously the fact we are all sisters and brothers - as you do - homeless shelters would be irrelevant. But they don't, so we must continue to reach within and beyond ourselves to make up for at least a small portion of the enormous shortfall. *So we thank you for taking the call to "love as I have loved" - very personally, very seriously. And we ask God to bless you and we pray that with your continued compassion and generosity, we will be able to go on serving thousands more in the next 30+ years.*☼

## **Compassionate Giving? Consider the following...**

By Erma Chastine, L&F Director

*"If someone asks for your shirt,  
give him your cloak as well..."*

While we are sensitive to the plight of all people during this economic low point, we at L&F must focus our service on the care of the homeless. Even though everyone has been affected in some way or another, yet we find ourselves blessed, and are so grateful to all of you who continue to donate your dollars to this crucial ministry in the midst of your own losses.

**Here are a few important facts to keep in mind when considering your next financial gift to Loaves & Fishes Ministries. This year we are facing a very serious imbalance between our grant funding and our expenses as compared to 2011.**

- **Our grant dollars were cut by \$7,000.00**
- **Our budgeted expenses increased by \$23,000.00**

We thank you for whatever you can give and bless you for your ongoing compassionate support.☼

## Bombi Got a New Job!

We are thankful for the diligent and good work of our former guest advocate, Riheti (Bombi) Ngubeni. Bombi has served our Loaves and Fishes guests and staff well and has shared his gifts freely and generously with the L&F community. He has accepted a position with the Ingham County Department of Human Services Foster Care Program. *Blessings on you and your new job, Bombi!*

**Thank you, Bombi!**

## Cherokee Legend

An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy.

"It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil - he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego." He continued, "The other is good - he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you - and inside every other person, too."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

## WELCOME TO MARK BONELLO OUR NEW GUEST ADVOCATE

By Jim Veruink, Core Community Member



We are pleased to welcome the newest member of our Loaves and Fishes team, **Mark Bonello**, as guest advocate. Mark comes to us with a wide variety of gifts and experiences. He has a wonderful ability to listen and respond to the needs of our guests. Mark has worked with at-risk youth, women and men who have struggled with substance abuse, neglectful and abusive relationships, and persons who have been in residential treatment. He has also helped vulnerable persons to develop better basic living skills and to realize their potential vocational skills.

**Mark feels called to serve our ministry.** He ardently supports the mission of Loaves and Fishes. Mark is passionate about serving our guests and shelter with a vision of peace with justice towards all who knock at our doors. It is a blessing to share in God's work with you, Mark. Welcome!

*(There is so much more to learn about Mark. We encourage you to attend our Volunteer In-services, which are planned and presented by the L&F staff.)*

## CONNECTIONS TO STIR COMPASSION

By Meri Krause, Core Community Member

If you are reading this newsletter, you likely don't need convincing when it comes to caring about the homeless. In fact, you likely spend some part of your life convincing others that they too should care more and do more to end the suffering of those without a permanent home. However, it can be difficult to get people to care about others with whom they feel no connection. **But in truth, we are all more interconnected than we appear.**

"Six Degrees of Separation" refers to the idea that everyone is, on average, approximately six steps away, by way of introduction, from any other person on Earth. You could accurately describe anyone in the world as "a friend of a friend" (of a friend of a friend of a friend). This idea was first thrown about in the late 1920's and gained some momentum in the 60's. Mathematicians and sociologists at some of the top universities in the world studied this It's-a-Small-World concept. Some agreed; some didn't. But even if the theory didn't hold true as late as the 1960's, *the advent of Facebook, Twitter, and other online-social media, which have greatly expanded our spheres of influence, would likely make it true today.*

It can be fun to think that we may only be 6 steps away from our favorite musician, the Queen of England, or someone living halfway around the world. **But that also means we are also only 6 steps away from each and every homeless person on the planet. We are not simply connected to a few homeless people or those living in our city. We are connected to ALL of them - everywhere. And if we are just 6 steps or less away from personally knowing each and every homeless person, imagine how few steps we may be from actually being homeless.** So the next time you think of someone who is homeless, please remember that he or she is a friend of a friend, who needs your compassion. ☼

## Louis' thank you letter

Dear Loaves & Fishes Ministries,

I want to take this time to thank you for the opportunity you've given me to be a resident at Luke's House. It has been a life saver. Luke's House not only gave me a residence, but it provided me help and a place to plant my feet to be able to start to turn things around in my life. You also gave me so much help that I'll never be able to repay.

I first heard of Luke's House when I was writing an essay for an Honor's program I was in while working on my associate's degree at LCC back in 1991. I then came on as a volunteer and did so off and on until about 3 years ago.

I was evicted from my apartment in 2010 and was staying with friends and family sleeping on their couches until it interfered in my family's schedules. I called Loaves and Fishes and was able to get a bed within 3 days. I had a rough plan of what I needed to do to get things in my life turned around. I was referred to Advent House to talk with James Mowry (an attorney who works with the poor), who took me on as a client. I wasn't sure where I was headed, but tried to get in the mindset that it may be the Lansing City Rescue Mission.

About 2 weeks into my stay at Loaves and Fishes, Bombi and I had talked about Luke's House. I was working for Hampton Jewelers as an advertising driver and found a room to rent for \$525 a month. I wanted to get on my own, but something didn't feel right. I had a savings of about \$800 from staying at the shelter. I put a deposit down. Then one night I came back to the shelter and told the guys about it and one commented that he didn't think I was ready and I felt relief in agreeing with him. So I asked Bombi if I could throw my

hat in to be considered for Luke's House - and he said yes. Needless to say, at the disappointment of the room owner, I got my deposit back and upon approval was able to pay the \*program fee 3 months in advance for Luke's House. I say all this because the job I had been working ended up diminishing after the holidays...and if I hadn't listened to the other resident at the shelter, I could have ended up in a worse place. Sometimes I think my Higher Power speaks through other people, and thankfully I listened. (\*NOTE: Guests who stay 6 mos to 2 yrs are asked to pay a modest program fee, if they receive personal funds, to help teach budgeting and responsibility in preparation for living on their own.)

After I had gotten into Luke's House, I started to do the things necessary to turn my life around and stay the course.

Since I've gotten here, I have been able to establish a good solid income, get a new used car that I paid cash for, maintained steady fee payments, payoff some debts, and take a course on learning to be a private real estate investor which I am now studying for.

My most recent accomplishment was the result of my taking action on my own with the IRS and their accepting an offer of \$2,450.00 for a \$50,000.00 debt. I just mailed in my final documents and am waiting for final approval from the IRS attorneys. This is so big!!! My next task will be to start working on getting my credit report taken care of. I was also able to re-establish payments on my student loans so they should soon reflect in good standing which will give me a cleaner credit report. Once the IRS receives final payment on my offer, this will also reflect in good standing which will bring my credit scores up and allow me to find housing with a better credit report.☀

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*Compassion and unconditional love are their own rewards.  
We need not search any further than our own hearts to find them.*

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Elizabeth McKay, Weekday Facilities Manager  
Mark Bonello, Guest Advocate  
Beth Young, Volunteer Coordinator

**Volunteer Scheduler**

Diane Rethamel



# **Congratulations!**

**Special thanks to our volunteers!**

*Without these incredibly generous people, L&F could not provide the compassionate service 24/7 for which our guests and staff are so grateful.*

**At our April 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon the following were given special awards:**

**Shirley B Willis - Volunteer Choice Award/Single person**  
**Harriet & Darren McCarthy - Volunteer Choice Award/Family**

**St Michael Parish - Volunteer Choice Award/Team**

**Lois Culter - Above & Beyond Award 30+ years of service**

**Barbara Curtis - Above & Beyond Award 30+ years of service and Founding Member**

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*"They are always dependable and can be counted on in an emergency and that is what has helped them to become our 2012 award winners!" - Beth Young, Volunteer Coordinator*

*If you would like to join our "Volunteer Team" please Call Beth at 517-482-2099.*

Email: [volunteer@loavesandfisheslansing.org](mailto:volunteer@loavesandfisheslansing.org)