

House of Peace

"Serving Christ's Poor"

A Ministry of the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph

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Thousands Donate Food & Gifts

And Thousands of Needy Neighbors Like the Carters Celebrate Holidays

Lula Carter is a single mother with 3 children ages 6 years old and under. "I have been coming to the House of Peace for the last 8 or 9 years for help," she said. "They have helped me with food, clothing, holiday baskets and more," she added.

Lula continued, "I look out for others when I am at the House of Peace. My sister is in prison right now and my 3 year old nephew needs clothing so I pick up anything that I think will fit him." At the start of the school year Lula signed up to receive book bags with school supplies inside plus new tennis shoes for her two oldest. What she did not know was that anyone who qualified for the school supply distribution was pre-qualified for the Holiday Food & Toy program as well.

Each participant must attend an empowerment class to receive the food boxes and toys. "I attended the class on how to work with the school to help your child succeed. We learned how important it is to read to your children. We get books from the House of Peace that we can read together at home," Lula said.

At Thanksgiving and Christmas Lula shared the food box she received with her friends and family. "I always have my brother over, my girlfriend Diane and another friend, Miss

Dorothy who is also the children's teacher's aide at school," Lula explained. "We enjoyed ham with the fixings at Thanksgiving and Cornish Game Hens at Christmas."

Victory, age 6 years old broke in, "And I received a Batman toy, Shrek bath stuff, molding clay, coloring books and crayons."

Victoria, age 3 years old added with a smile, "I got a Princess Endora doll, My Little Pony set, Teddy Bears, coloring books and crayons!" Lula continued, "And the baby, Veronica received stacking and sorting blocks, a cow to ride on (at this the whole family laughed) plus two outfits, PJ's and a jogging suit."

Lula said, "I really depend on the House of Peace and thank everyone at the House of Peace who helps me to feed and clothe my family." Gerri Sheets-Howard, Assistant Director said, "Lula and her family are exactly the people our donors are supporting when they make gifts of food, clothes or money. I am blessed to often hear their thank you's and I want to pass their appreciation on to all of our supporters."

To hear more of the interview with Lula Carter and her children to our homepage and click on the podcast. Our web address is: www.houseofpeacemilwaukee.org



Above: Gerri Sheets-Howard, Assistant Director holds baby Veronica and guest Lula Carter poses with children and gifts.



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P.S. Are you, or do you know of, a man aged 18 - 50 who you think would make a good Capuchin Friar? If so, please contact our Capuchin Vocation Director, Fr. John Holly, at (773) 475-6206. He's waiting for your call.

Dove Notes

Dear Friends of the House of Peace,

Peace to you! I hope 2009 is treating you good and that you have been well. I think I've mentioned before that when I was young and foolish I made a living with a guitar strapped across my back. Of course that was before I joined the Capuchins! Night after night I played in barrooms and brawl rooms from West Virginia to Wyoming, from Louisiana to Saskatchewan and all the little towns along the way and out of the way and in between. "Dim lights, thick smoke, and loud, loud music," as the country song goes, pretty much described my life. And I liked it.

One of the kids in our Teen Program seemed interested recently in my old life. "Did you ever record? Can I download your stuff from the Internet?" he asked. "No," I said, "It was all vinyl back then, LPs, records, but yes I did record an album one time." With the mention of LPs and vinyl his eyes kind of glazed over and he seemed to lose a good deal of interest. He looked rather like an anthropologist coming upon an already discovered and not too interesting cave drawing. I think he politely said something about how he would like to hear all about it some day. Unsaid but obvious was that today was not going to be the day!!

As a young man with a guitar job I never dreamed that God's grace would lead

me to being a Capuchin friar at the House of Peace (HOP). I am so grateful that it did.

Here at the HOP we are favored this year to have with us two young men in the initial stages of responding to God's call to be Capuchin friars: Ken Cole and Quan Minh Nguyen. We are also blessed with the regular presence of a diocesan seminarian,



Above: Br. Mark thanks the students of St. Kilian's, Hartford during Catholic Schools Week for their service making lunches for the needy.

Brad Krawczyk. God's grace has brought them all to the HOP. Having these guys here as they explore and nurture their vocations to religious life and priesthood is a great gift to us all. And we are very happy to be a part of their vocational journeys. Their caring presence, their gospel behavior, and the sweat they spill for those in need are inspirational and help motivate the rest of us to do our best at the HOP.

I recently asked each of them to share something of their experience of the HOP. They did. And I share it with you:

"I am not one to talk much...but everyone makes me feel welcomed. When I was a student at St. Lawrence Seminary we made a lot of ministry trips. To get back to that here at the House of Peace has been so awesome. Just to be able to make someone's life better in some way is very rewarding."

Quan Minh Nguyen

"Today, with...the staff acting together with the people who...support the House of Peace...[and]...the volunteers..., we were

able to help a young single mother and her child with a serious problem. My experience of the House of Peace is just that: bringing one of God's great gifts - hope - to people who are in desperate need of it."

Ken Cole



Above, Left to Right: Brad Krawczyk, Ken Cole and Quan Nguyen pack food boxes for the House of Peace. Brad is a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and serves one full day each week. Ken is a Capuchin postulant from the Province of St. Mary, Mother of the Good Shepherd in Canada. Quan is also a Capuchin postulant from the Province of St. Joseph which includes Wisconsin. Ken and Quan serve four afternoons per week. Brad, Ken & Quan serve the poor by assisting at the front desk, in the Food Pantry, Clothes Closet and with the Holiday Food Box program.

"On any given day a guest's experience at the House of Peace may be the only 'peaceful' encounter they have all day. [It's] a safe place where guests are treated with respect, dignity, and...the love Jesus has for us. The House of Peace is demonstrating the Gospel message through action." **Brad Krawczyk**

Now, isn't that nice?! We ran these guys and everyone else ragged around here at Thanksgiving and Christmas last year, and I have to say "Thank YOU" for that. With your support we provided over 2,200 holiday food boxes to those in need and toys for nearly 2,000 children living in poverty. No wonder you were tired after Christmas!! We are so grateful to you for helping us help the poor celebrate the holidays.

And now here we are in Lent. Again. It's a time when we think of making sacrifices and giving alms. A time of waiting for spring, and the new life it brings. A time when we are reminded of the sacrifice of the Son for us all so that we might know joyful everlasting life unencumbered by sin and sorrow. As solemn a time as Lent is, it must be a really merry old time for the optimist. For it is the time when we know things are going to get better by and by. Easter is coming! We have it on the best of authority! And

we shall rejoice in its dawn.

I started out this letter by saying when I was young and foolish I made a living with a guitar strapped across my back. I'm not young anymore and my guitar has been handed down to a couple of nephews who consider it a collector's item because of its age. (When I bought it, it was brand new!!) But I'm still 'foolish' enough to believe in God's grace. I see its effect in the vocational journeys of Brad, Ken and Quan at

the HOP. I see its effect in what happens here as a result of your prayers and financial support. And when I don't see its effect I know I am not looking for it hard enough.

As a Lenten activity this year, why not 'grease the skids' for God's grace by suggesting a vocation to religious life or priesthood to someone you know? If you think they'd make a good Capuchin, have them look at www.capuchinfranciscans.org. And as you consider giving alms this Lent I'd be grateful if you would keep the HOP in mind. I pray you will have a blessed, holy Lent.

Your Capuchin brother,

Br. Mark Carrico, OFM, Capuchin
Executive Director



A Ministry of the Capuchin
Province of St. Joseph

House of Peace

PO Box 05656

1702 W. Walnut Street

Milwaukee, WI 53205

Phone: 414.933.1300

Fax: 414.933.0395

www.houseofpeacemilwaukee.org

www.thecapuchins.org

markdcarrico@juno.com

The House of Peace is a
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All donations are tax deductible
as allowable by law.

Holiday Food Box & Toy Drives Successfully Feed Thousands!

117 Churches, Schools, Clubs, Businesses, Colleges and Government Agencies ran food and/or toy drives from October to December, 2008. Br. Mark and his staff spoke to thousands at church and business gatherings to seek help for the poor. Many people responded generously with gifts including St. Anthony's On the Lake, Pewaukee. Parish volunteers collected food, packed boxes and held a distribution day at the House of Peace.



Above: A parent from St. Anthony's carries a food box for a guest with a cane.



Above: Gerri Sheets-Howard shares a story with parents & young volunteers from St. Anthony's. Gerri shared how she herself was once a guest at the House of Peace & now has earned her Master's degree while working there. Clare Peiffer, DRE said the talk was "inspirational."

THANK YOU!

Michael Redd Foundation, Milwaukee Bucks, M&I Bank, Roundy's and other corporate sponsors join with individual and group donors to help the poor.



Above: Michael Redd poses with student volunteers from Divine Savior Holy Angels, Dominican & Messmer High Schools. **Right:** Michael receives an enthusiastic hug as he gives guests a box of food, a turkey and 2 hats for the holidays.



Please consider including the House of Peace in your will. To discuss other giving options, call Jim Van Hoven, Development Director, (414) 374-8841, ext. 26.