

# House of Peace

*"Serving Christ's Poor"*

*A Ministry of the Capuchin Province of St. Joseph*

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Service  
1968 - 2010

## Family Finds Help At House of Peace

**They receive food, toys and clothing and donate same when able.**

**A**fter her husband, Reynaldo suffered a heart attack several years ago; Maritza became the sole provider for her family. She has also seen her hours as a personal care attendant reduced and her husband's unemployment has run out.

"God will supply," Maritza said. "I learned of the House of Peace from some other ladies." Since discovering the House of Peace, the Oak Creek resident has been able to receive food, clothing and Christmas toys for her family. "We have two children, our daughter Itzamari and our son Reynaldo, Jr.," she explained.

Maritza's eyes grew wet as she said, "They are such good children, they never ask for much for birthdays or Christmas. This year we attended the Breakfast with Baby Jesus program that St. Francis Borgia, Cedarburg puts on at the House of Peace and received food and gifts for Christmas." She continued, "Itzamari received a frog necklace and socks with frogs on them. She really likes frogs. We also received new blankets."

Maritza remembered Christmas two years ago. "The kids both received Nike shoes, a

Packer's Jersey, an outfit from Kohl's and a coat," she said. "Now that I know how the House of Peace can help me care for my family I do come here throughout the year." She added, "I also get clothing from my family in Chicago so anything I can't use I also donate here."



**Above:** Reynaldo, Maritza and Itzamari pose with Fr. Perry Mc Donald and volunteers from St. Francis Borgia Parish, Cedarburg

"This way if others are in need they can be blessed here at the House of Peace," Maritza said. "We have also been able to receive school supplies for the kids and food

when we need it from the food pantry." Gerri Sheets-Howard, Executive Director commented, "Maritza and Reynaldo's situation is one we are seeing more frequently here at the House of Peace. People are being affected by health problems and the recession. Some are coming in from the suburbs to find help with their basic needs: food and clothing."

Gerri added, "We are seeing an increase in requests for help while we are experiencing a decline in the donation of dollars and goods. The help of all is really crucial if the House of Peace is going to serve those in need. I'd ask our friends to please send a gift today as the need is growing."



**House of Peace  
Ministry Council**

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Fr. Al Veik,  
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**Pastoral Director:**  
Br. Mark Carrico,  
O.F.M., Capuchin

**Executive Director:**  
Gerri Sheets-Howard,  
M.A.

*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

I arrived at the House of Peace (HOP), appointed as the pastoral director, on November 4, 2009 amidst a whirlwind of activity in preparation for the Holiday Food Box drive for Thanksgiving. I had just

finished a 12 month sabbatical where I was given time to rebuild my emotional, spiritual, and mental energies by attending a four month course to update myself in theology, spirituality and psychology. I spent the other eight months visiting relatives and friends throughout the US whom I had seldom seen. I was also privileged to make pilgrimages to the Holy Land where Jesus walked and to the shrine of Lourdes, France.

Because a major part of my responsibilities as pastoral director is to give talks about the HOP I had seventeen commitments already assigned during the months of November and December (with more to come) to speak to various groups about the Holiday Food Box drive. I met with the executive director, Gerri Sheets-Howard, to find out the background about the drive and what I was supposed to say. That month was a "baptism by fire" for me, but it certainly



**Above:** The friars, staff and volunteers who lead the Holiday Food Boxes & Toy drives thank our donors. Your support helped us feed over 5,000 people during the holidays!



**Above:** Fr. Perry preaches to Religious Education students at Holy Family Parish, Whitefish Bay about St. Francis and the call to care for the poor. Holiday Food Boxes that the students filled in their classes are stacked behind him.

helped me quickly to appreciate the ministry of the HOP.

I quickly became proud of the staff. They welcomed me warmly, even offering a birthday card and a plant! I spent the first few days

speaking to each of the staff, learning about their jobs and how they spent their time. Then I watched them. Are they ever hard and dedicated workers! While each needs to work within the parameters of what the HOP can provide, each treated the guests with dignity, kindness and hospitality, even when they couldn't give the guests everything requested. In the midst of the crush of activity, they demonstrated that we certainly are a house of peace.

I learned about the many wonderful donors to the HOP as I signed letter after

letter thanking them for their financial gifts or for the food, clothing and toys they brought. When the guests thank me for the help that the HOP gives, I remind them "to thank God for our donors since we only pass on what they give." While the HOP is a ministry of the Capuchins, it is certainly a ministry of the thousands of donors who

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Dove Notes (Continued)

find a way to share what they have with others in need. Like Fr. Matthew Gottschalk, I spend time each day praying over the return cards that we receive and the many prayer requests. God bless our donors!

And the volunteers, how blessed the HOP is to have so many: the regular faithful ones, others who gave a few hours helping to sort clothes, organize and distribute the Holiday Food Boxes and Christmas toys, or those who spent hours providing a meal and entertainment to our guests. No one can doubt that the spirit of sharing and good will is alive in our world after meeting the volunteers.

I had not seen the results of the “Make room for...hope” renovations until I arrived. What a warm

and receptive space is offered to our guests! The lift by the front door and the elevator speaks of care for the disabled. The staff in our Capuchin Clothing Closet and food pantry now has the space needed to work with needed drop-off areas; the basement has enough room for storage and working space for staff and volunteers to organize what is given.

Yes, I am very proud to be part of the HOP. I thank God for the staff, donors, and volunteers. We are all doing God’s work.



Fr. Perry McDonald, OFM, Capuchin  
Pastoral Director

## Cap Corps Volunteer Helps Other Volunteers Serve

Tall with a constant smile, Phil Gardner is the Cap Corps Volunteer stationed at the HOP.

Cap Corps is a volunteer service program run by the Capuchins who also operate the HOP. “I screen, train and supervise all of the volunteers here,” Phil explained. “Most are assigned to help with the Food Pantry or Clothes Closet,” he added.

Each year the HOP receives over \$100,000 worth of donated goods. They represent thousands of items, cans of food, boxes, sweaters, pants, shirts and more... all of which must be sorted and prepared to be given to the poor.

Phil said, “We couldn’t operate the pantry or closet without volunteer help. Barb Kramer is a good

example of our volunteers.” Barb is a recent retiree who lives in Cedarburg and learned of the HOP through her church, St. Francis Borgia Parish.



**Above:** Phil Gardner, Volunteer Coordinator and Barb Kramer, Volunteer work on folding new sweaters for distribution through the Capuchin Clothes Closet.

“I started to volunteer here at the HOP during the holidays. I don’t have any kids and wanted to find a way to help out when I knew many other people probably couldn’t volunteer,” said Barb.

Then Barb smiled and said, “We were so busy sorting food or toys to be distributed to those in need. Now I help out one morning a week in

the Clothes Closet.” Barb continued, “The staff and other volunteers are so nice, just like family. I had an opportunity to actually give a family their holiday meal and Christmas toys and that was very special.”



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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](http://www.houseofpeacemilwaukee.org)

[www.thecapuchins.org](http://www.thecapuchins.org)

[houseofpeace@thecapuchins.org](mailto:houseofpeace@thecapuchins.org)

The House of Peace is a  
501 (c) (3) ministry.  
All donations are tax deductible  
as allowable by law.



## Churches Minister At The House of Peace

**Left:** Members of St. Francis Borgia Parish, Cedarburg hold a “Breakfast with Baby Jesus” party for families in need. The parish donated toys and cooked a complete breakfast for all guests and volunteers attending. After breakfast the members put on a Christmas pageant that includes all of the children present.



**Left:** Deacon Gene Christensen (standing, left) and members of Good Shepherd Parish, Menomonee Falls meet the new Pastoral Director, Fr. Perry McDonald. The parishioners bring food and toys in for distribution to the poor and then share a meal with the Capuchins and staff who minister there.



## Hygiene Items Needed at House of Peace

According to Executive Director Gerri Sheets-Howard, M.A., the House of Peace is in need of a variety of hygiene items. “We would like to be able to give our guests these items when they pick up food from our pantry,” said Gerri. She added, “Many of our guests are under employed or unemployed and need hygiene items to maintain their health and find work.”

Donations of hygiene items can be dropped off at the 17th Street side of the building, Monday to Friday, 9 AM to Noon and 1 PM to 4 PM. Donors should ring the outside doorbell by the overhang and a staff member will unload the items from their car.



- Bar soap
- Tooth paste
- Tooth brush
- Deodorant
- Shampoo
- Shaving cream

- Disposable razors
- Body lotion
- Chap stick
- Mouth wash
- Feminine panty
- liners/pads

- Baby wipes
- Disposable diapers
- Face towels
- Hand sanitizer
- Toilet paper
- Petroleum jelly (Vaseline)



*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.*