



The Healing Hands

Winter-Spring
2007

BROOKLYN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HOME AND ADULT DAY HEALTHCARE CENTER



Mrs. Kearns by painting of 920 Park Place location of the Home.

“My heart is here at the nursing home,” says Mrs. Kearns when interviewed upon retiring from 44 years of serving at BUMCH, the last 25 of them as cook. To make the facility more homelike for the residents, on her own time and at her own expense, she made curtains, put up Christmas trees, painted walls, and came on Sundays to help clean before state inspections. In turn, she is thankful that through her paid work she was able to educate her children, buy a home, and live debt-free.

Claudette Kearns's tenure at BUMCH leaves no doubt that this Methodist-founded, now non-sectarian, non-profit nursing home, has changed — and progressed — along with the country since the Home's beginnings in 1883.

44 years ago, Mrs. Kearns remembers, the Home was quite rich. There was a 10-year waiting list for residents, who yielded all their assets to the Home, with the assurance of life-long care. The facility at 920 Park Place (built in 1889) was beautiful, with only single rooms, red carpets in the hallways (too narrow, however), and

BUMCH prepares to celebrate 125th anniversary in 2008

Mrs. Claudette Kearns retires —
served the nursing home 44 years

Mrs. Luna Gordon celebrates 100th birthday at the Home

a majestic dining room, where every patient came dressed up for all three meals. The food was of high quality — everything made “from scratch.”

Mrs. Kearns recalls being interviewed in front of 75 Board members. Her first paycheck for two weeks was \$50. There were no other persons of color among the staff, or the residents. She was given the nickname “Carmen” on the theory that residents could more easily identify with the well-known name of Carmen Miranda and wouldn't think of her as just “the Black Girl.” There was no union for the workers.

*LONGEVITY
bestows its many gifts of
experience, service,
wisdom, and love.*

*Few places can witness to these
gifts as well as The Brooklyn
United Methodist Church
Home.*

It was the Civil Rights era. Mrs. Kearns remembers being welcomed at the 1963 March on Washington led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr: “We're glad you're here — we want to make a difference, too.”

Through her love and respect for the residents and the staff, Mrs. Kearns made a difference. She opened the way at the Home for cultural diversity and for the labor union, brought in at her initiative. Now that's another great story!

In 1976 BUMCH moved to its present, more modern and up-to-code, building at 1485 Dumont Avenue. Lovely new quarters were added in 2002 for the Adult Day Healthcare Program.

Mrs. Kearns promises to pray for us, trusting that the Home will continue for another 100 years.

By the way, that would be as long as the age reached by our resident, Mrs. Luna Gordon, this January.



Happy 100th to Mrs. Gordon and blessings to her devoted daughter, Ms. Cynthia Miller.

Administrator's Message



This year, entering into spring had quite a different feel for me, primarily because the proposed budget by Governor Spitzer seemed to me to be a certainty. Should this budget pass with all the cuts enumerated it would prove devastating to our industry.

I remember thinking, how will we be able to serve this infirm population. It would mean reducing staff, and curtailing services.

Well, the industry as usual responded. Labor, Management and Associations collaborated to communicate our opposition to the cuts proposed by the Governor. Rallies were held, calls were placed to our politicians, letters were sent to our legislators, ads rolled out in the media.

Long story short, the Governor's new budget was unveiled with some cuts, but certainly not the kind that would cripple the industry. And, while I believe that there are many variables that contributed to the end result, I like to believe that the collaboration between labor, management and the associations had much to do with it. I specifically remember at the one rally I participated in, seeing everyone walking shoulder to shoulder and braving the elements for a common goal. It was at this moment that I felt a renewed enthusiasm and great sense of pride in doing what we do, caring for the infirm elderly. I felt like all present this day felt the very same way, at least I hope so. I remember thinking that if we could only put forward this kind of energy and sense of community with every endeavor, what magnificent things can be accomplished. I pray that we can.

Oh, there is one other reason this spring felt a little different, both New York Baseball teams have a legitimate shot at the post season. Dare I say subway series. GO NEW YORK !!!

— Victor Orriola

Congratulations to the Entire BUMCH Staff

Passing of the state budget was not the only thing the Home celebrated. In addition, we did well on the annual state survey that was conducted in February. It is satisfying to know that we perform up to the very rigorous standards set by the state and are receiving guidance on how to serve our residents ever better.



Carolyn Roper-Smartt (Human Resources), Wendell Williams (Environmental), Nereida Ortiz (Admissions), Victor Orriola (Administrator), Vanesia Daniel-Allen (Social Services), Linda Levine (Recreation), Kamla Ramsumair (Director of Nursing) were the Department Heads who served a special lunch for the staff, prepared by Winston Watson (Director of Food and Nutrition) to the well-deserving Staff.

Administrator Victor Orriola and Director of Nursing Kamla Ramsu-mair, both still in their serving garb and hair nets, expressed honor to the staff and encouragement that the good work and cooperation between all departments continue every day of the year.



The nursing staff, knowing what Ms. Ramsu-mair put into preparing for the state survey, gave her a gift and a poem dedicated to her, read by Jackie Taylor, CNA.



Nineteenth Annual Award Dinner Dance



Nearly 300 guests gathered on November 14, 2006 at Russo's on the Bay to honor leaders of our community, who have also nurtured the Home.

Ed Stack, who himself has long served the Home, introduced the recipient of THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD, Robert Rigoroso, Private Banker-Vice President, The Citigroup Private Bank, in the presence of his wife, Nanette, and his children, Tyler and Angelina.



THE WILLIAM C. KIRKWOOD HUMANITARIAN AWARD was presented to the Rev. John H. Cole, Pastor of Grace United Methodist Church, Valley Stream, NY and a member of the BUMCH Board of Directors, by Ascension L. Day, who is also a long-time member of the BUMCH Board of Directors. Rev. Cole's wife, Dr. Polly Wheat, shared the honor, as one who knows best what goes into such dedicated work.

Walter Campbell, District Manager of Brooklyn Community Board 5, was joined by his wife, Eunice, as he was presented with THE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD by the Rev. N.J. L'Heureux, Executive Director of the Queens Federation of Churches.

The Annual Awards Dinner Dance is the only fundraiser conducted by BUMCH, and a great deal of work goes into organizing it every year, to ensure that it is highly meaningful and also enjoyable for all the guests. Proceeds of this event are used for grants not only to BUMCH but also to other non-profit organizations which are contributing to community health and well-being..



Nineteenth Annual Award Dinner Dance



Sandra Pitterson-Cohen



Carolyn Roper-Smartt



Chris Stack
Co-Chair



Ruby L'Heureux
Co-Chair



Don Kirby



Victor Orriola

The Dinner Dance Committee



Robert Rigoroso



Kamla Ramsumair



Don Sheldon



Jay Lisnow



Priscilla Frazier



Rev. Ieva Zadina



A surprise award was given to Mrs. Carolyn Roper-Smartt, Director of Human Resources at BUMCH — the person who over the years has been the hard-working heart of these wonderful events, knowing best what must be done and how to do it to assure that the dinner dances run smoothly. Husband Rev. William Smartt, Director of Nursing Kamla Ramsumair, and Administrator Victor Orriola listen to Carolyn's reminiscences.

And so many other contributors, including:



Ed Stack
Advisor



Lorraine Covington Williams



Kwong Wong

Photography



Linda Sheldon
Silent Auction



Rev. Skip L'Heureux
Communications



Doris Albino
&
Pat Hester-Bey

Decorations



Linda Levine

Our Marvelous Volunteers



Our Marvellous Volunteers



Teacher Vanessa Dixon leads pupils from PS 13 in joyful song at Christmas, and they promise to come again in May. Ms. Dixon also lends her powerful preaching and singing at fourth-Sunday services at the Home, along with Dorothy Meade (at left) from Agape Tabernacle International Fellowship.



When members from Valley Stream UMC come every year with gifts, songs and love, you learn what "Christmas cheer" means!

Christmas MOMENTS



A child's hug thrilled resident Mrs. Eureatha Harris when Valley Stream UMC visited.



Mrs. Stewart, what interests you more — the gift or the child?



Members of St. Paul's UMC in Jamaica brought songs, prayers and presents for every resident in the Home.



Carolers from Euclid Baptist Church delight resident Andrea McClaurin.



The BUMCH Auxiliary collects Christmas gifts all year for the residents. They also have a fundraising dinner every Spring to assure that gifts can be brought to the Home all year long.

President's Greeting

As I write, there is a foot of snow in Jacob's Field in Cleveland, and more than that in other places in the Northeast. But, our Mets and Yankees are putting up Major League box scores, so we know for certain that Spring, the season of new life and hope, has once again arrived. Soon, those tentative bird chirps will burst into full song. Then shall we be reminded of the blessed assurance of Jesus: "Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to God than the birds."

Spring ever is a reminder that God continues to care for us, often in ways that we don't fully understand. And our caring God calls upon each one of us to care for one another. Whether we are in "the prime of life" or in our "golden (some say twilight) years" it is never too early or too late to be caring in all that we say and all that we do.

I recently returned from a fourth visit to the Holy Land. I saw that formidable wall built to separate the Jewish and Palestinian areas. To some this is a "good" wall to the extent that it has largely curtailed suicide bombers who wreak havoc on women, men, and children; to others, a "bad" wall that divides the millions of people who want to live and work in peace with one another.

Amidst this tumult, hope abounds through the bridge building work of Father Elias Chacour in the Galilee and Alex Awad, founder and President of the Bethlehem Bible College. As we pray for the success of the bridge-building, peace-making efforts of such as these, we need also to pray for ourselves, that we may repent of feelings of the "I" and the "you" and the "we" and the "they". As affirmed by the folk singer Tom Paxton, "Peace will come, peace will come, let it begin with me", for the advent of justice and peace (you can't have one without the other) in the world, comes to each of us first in our own hearts.

Thanks to all those in the BUMCH family who, because they care, tirelessly work for justice and peace, first among those closest to them, and then throughout our community and beyond.

— Don Kirby, President, Board of Directors



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Bridges to Health

Another kind of bridge-building occurs in the excellent Physical and Occupational Therapy department at BUMCH, as it performs daily, step-by-step miracles of healing and strengthening. Here, our resident, Andrea McClaurin, makes a sign of victory as she crosses the "bridge" between wheelchair and teacher.

Editor's Note



Winter and spring temperatures have been so intermingled this year, that it has seemed to us not unfitting to combine the Winter and Spring issues of *The Healing Hands*.



Brooklyn United Methodist Church Home
And Adult Day Healthcare Center
1485 Dumont Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11208



Also see our website:
www.bumch.org

BUMCH HEALTH FAIR
SATURDAY, June 23 • 10 to 6
For information, call 718-827-4500

Adult Day Healthcare Center

Some of Mrs. Gordon's Secrets for a long, healthy & happy life:

1. Take things slow; no hurry.
2. Everything in moderation.
3. Eat healthy food.
4. Express your feelings honestly and then let them go.
5. Go to church.
6. Maintain good relationships with folks (young and old).

(see article on page 1)

THE ADULT DAY HEALTHCARE PROGRAM believes in implementing all of the "secrets" above, and would add more:

Laugh, play & celebrate.

Exercise—move—dance

(in body, mind and/or spirit).

Keep your senses sharp.

Learn new things.

Make new things.

Take trips to new places.

Grow things in the garden.

Support each other.

The goal of ADHC is to keep Registrants strong and able to continue living at home, while benefiting from medical, nutritional, social, emotional and spiritual care.



Dance!



That's right,
Mr. Hill, leave
that walker
behind you for
a while!



Recreation Leader Vivian Cappas greets Resident Leslie DeWese at the gala New Year's Eve party.



Children from PS 13 join in dominoes and drum-playing with Registrants during a Christmas visit. All generations enjoyed themselves.