

A Taste of TASK

Did you know?

- On August 30, TASK served a record number of 623 lunches.
- TASK served 14,451 meals in June, 13,761 meals in July and 15,110 meals in August.
- TASK is ranked with the highest 4-star rating on Charity Navigator.

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Survival and Self-Sufficiency

with the Help of Social Workers

One of the requirements for working at TASK is to be able to function with a priority list that constantly changes and the ability to thrive in what seems like daily organized chaos. For Trenton's most needy, issues like hunger, domestic abuse, drug addiction, homelessness, illiteracy, and medical emergencies are all too common. TASK is here not only to feed the hungry but also to help our patrons achieve self-sufficiency. For each personal struggle that is overcome, an individual is one step closer to being able to stand on his/her own.



Mary Ann Dobson made phone calls until she found a pair of glasses for Dave.

For example, Dave's prescription glasses were stolen one night last year as he slept in the local shelter. He squinted and suffered splitting headaches for three months. His job slicing meat at the supermarket became much more dangerous without 20/20 vision, but he couldn't afford to buy new glasses and save enough rent money to move out of the shelter at the same time. Our social worker, Mary Ann, was there to help. When no social service program or agency could pay for this expense, she eventually reached a generous lawyer who

offered to meet Dave at the eyeglasses store to help him purchase this expensive necessity.

To combat the daily struggles of our patrons, TASK employed an intensive case manager through a subcontract with the social service agency Catholic Charities to work full time at our Escher Street facility. In June of 2002, Anne Hamilton joined the ranks at TASK, to confront the daily issues that keep bringing patrons to eat at the soup kitchen. When she started four years ago, she quickly built the trust of the patrons and saw her caseload rise from eight clients each day to an average of 22 clients each day. Anne had so many clients that TASK subcontracted a second social worker in 2005. Mary Ann Dobson has been working at TASK for over a year now, and has had a saturated case load since she began.

"This is like a war zone," Mary Ann explains, "It's combat every single day



Anne Hamilton assists clients with issues such as housing, employment, addiction, and medical care.

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Wrap Gifts for TASK

Want to volunteer during the holidays? TASK has four days scheduled in December when we will be providing gift wrapping services at **Barnes & Noble Booksellers at the MarketFair Mall in Princeton**. This is a great chance to tell the community about TASK's work and to raise money for the soup kitchen (gift wrapping is free, but all donations for the service will go to TASK).

We will need volunteers to help wrap gifts December 13th through December 16th 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. Volunteers can sign up for two or three hour shifts by contacting Kelly Hansen, Adult Education Coordinator at TASK (609) 695-5456 x107.

If you can't volunteer, stop by Barnes & Noble on one of these days and have a gift wrapped!



Pictured above, volunteers from Trinity Episcopal Church of Princeton help prepare a meal.

Touched by TASK

Over the years, we have received many stories of volunteers, students, board members, staff and patrons who have been "touched" by their experiences at TASK. This new column will regularly feature these stories. If you have an experience you'd like to share, please email it to jaimep@trentonsoupkitchen.org or mail it attn: Jaime to 72 1/2 Escher St. Box 872, Trenton, NJ 08605.

The following was submitted by Rebecca, who spent a week volunteering at TASK through Justiceworkx, a summer camp that sends high school students to different service sites throughout the Trenton area.

On June 19, 2006, I entered the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, ready to do service and help however I could. Over the course of my first day, I discovered many things: that bagging cookies, crackers, and chocolate chips is a lot of work; that even the smallest smile can mean a lot to someone who's had a bad day; that soup kitchen food really is edible (and the pastries are delicious!).

Every day we did something new. We tutored, served on the line, bagged foods into snack packs, wrapped trays and stuffed envelopes. At no point was there a lull in activity; it became clear that TASK never rests.

The best day of my experience was Thursday, when I was serving behind the counter during lunch hour. At that point in the week I recognized customers and they recognized me, and it was such a great feeling to be able to say hi and ask them about their lives.

The truly rewarding thing was that the results of our work were immediately apparent (we handed out the same bags of chips that we had bagged that morning). The disappointing thing was that our work wouldn't last. Would our work bagging in the back room last for more than a day?

I think so. That week was one of the best in my life, and as long as I remember and revisit TASK, I'm sure that the people will remember me too.

Annabelle's A-TEAM Kids

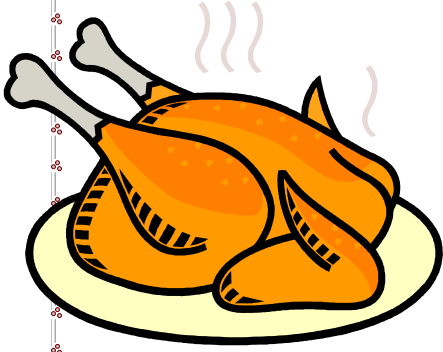
When one of the founding members of the A-TEAM artist co-op passed away last year, she left a legacy. Annabelle's A-TEAM kids was started as an opportunity for children like Tyhiera (shown at left) to practice her ability to create art. This summer, eleven year old Tyhiera joined the A-TEAM as one of Annabelle's kids and has already had one of her pictures displayed in a gallery show. When asked why she likes art, Tyhiera said, "It's fun. It relieves you of all your stress. It makes me feel good...happy...nice."



Turkeys Wanted!

Many grocery stores now offer free frozen turkeys to customers. If you don't want yours, we would love it!

All donations can be delivered to TASK Monday-Thursday 9:00am-5:00pm and Friday 9:00am-1:00pm.



A Big-Hearted Project for Big Brothers Big Sisters

Scott McIntosh is a man with heart. He appreciates the value of children, education, and community, and is working to join it all together. For the past five years, he has been a "Big" with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mercer County, a mentoring program that connects children in need of a mentor and friend with a caring adult volunteer. Studies have shown and Scott has seen firsthand that children improve in school and extra-curricular activities when they have a positive role model.

Once a week, Scott typically takes his "Little" to a movie or to a playground. This summer, however, Scott started a project to share the joys of helping others. He invited other "Bigs" and "Littles" to join him in raising funds for TASK. Scott petitioned local supermarkets to set up tables and the "Bigs" and "Littles" asked customers to help Big Brothers Big Sisters feed the homeless in Mercer County. Through their efforts, they contributed \$1,300 and four truckloads of food!

"Visiting TASK is an eye-opening experience," Scott said, "It feels good to help the less fortunate and I wanted to teach the 'Littles' that no matter what your situation, you can still give back. It doesn't matter if you don't have a lot."

Scott hopes that this new project will become a national event for Big Brothers Big Sisters. Through his efforts, Scott admits that his goal was "to inspire someone to do something in their community".

**"From what we get, we can make a living;
what we give, however, makes a life."**

~Arthur Ashe

at the soup kitchen. There is no break. People constantly have things going on in their lives."

The daily issues that Anne and Mary Ann deal with range from helping clients obtain suitable clothes for funerals or job interviews to procuring prescription medication that uninsured clients cannot afford.

Since Mary Ann has begun working at TASK, she and Anne have been able to work in shifts so that a social worker is available every hour the facility is open. Mary Ann's day runs from 8:30 am to 4:30pm and Anne's day spans 9:30am to 5:30pm. The services that the social workers provide to our patrons can sometimes mean the difference between life and death.

Mary Ann starts her workday before she even enters the building. As she parks her car, TASK patrons meet her out on the sidewalk to consult her for advice and assistance. "These are the individuals that need help right now," Mary Ann explains, "usually they're either being evicted from their housing or they need to contact social services." The patron enters with Mary Ann and the workday continues.

Mary Ann and Anne have added a lot to TASK's services, including a lawyer consultation program, visits from the Health Van, the Eye Van, and an audiologist. They have obtained eyeglasses, hearing aids, blood pressure screenings, AIDS testings, and even a wedding dress in one case. Among all this, they regularly assist clients with finding affordable housing, pursuing employment, entering addiction programs, and paying for prescriptions.

Some of their clients have trouble obtaining benefits for which they are eligible because they are illiterate and cannot read or understand the mail that they receive or they are homeless and mail is not being delivered to where they are staying. While TASK is offering the services of the Adult Education Program to combat illiteracy and the opportunity for patrons to receive their mail at TASK, it has been difficult to keep up with the increasing need.

"In previous years, my office has been less busy," Anne noted, "but this year Mary Ann and I have been seeing clients nonstop. While we enjoy the work that we do, we'd like to see the need for our services decrease."

IN MEMORIUM

Patricia Dorsey

1936-2006

TASK Director 1988-1992

Thank you, Pat.

Adult Education Program Honors Students

August 25, 2006 marked the 7th Annual Adult Education Program (AEP) Student Recognition Breakfast. Pictured at right, student Shirley (left) smiles for the camera with Adult Education Coordinator, Kelly, as computer teacher Diane looks on. David, a tutor in the program, volunteered his professional services as a photographer.



Gloria Nilson GMAC Real Estate Pennington Office Adopts TASK

The Gloria Nilson GMAC Real Estate Pennington office has been raising money the old-fashioned way. Their office has been home to a bake sale every Saturday morning with proceeds benefiting TASK.

The idea started with real estate agent Andrea D'Angleo volunteering at TASK. Later, her office decided that they wanted to adopt TASK as a community organization.

In addition to a monthly bake sale, artwork from the A-TEAM artist co-op is exhibited on their walls. The Pennington office also serves as a donation drop off for hygiene items and canned goods for TASK. The October 7th bake sale at their Hopewell Crossing Shopping Center office will also feature an A-TEAM art show and the real estate agents will soon begin serving dinner at TASK once a month.

Manager Susan Vanselous commented, "This is a community that supports us, so this is our way of giving back to support the community."

Meet Robyn, Director of Volunteer and Patron Services

Robyn Milgram is no stranger to service. Although she has only been at TASK since November of 2005, she has spent the past twenty years working as a non-profit professional. Her background as a case manager and the overseer of a Pennsylvania transitional housing complex has given her experience in dealing with the types of services that TASK provides.

Her duties at TASK include recruiting, orientating, and training volunteers as well as providing TASK's daily patron services that include hygiene bag distribution, conducting giveaways, and managing the mail and fax services.

"The thing that attracted me to TASK was the diversity", Robyn acknowledged. "I think people grow more when they are diverse". Robyn enjoys working with volunteers and meeting the patrons of varied backgrounds. Her office at the front of the dining room is in an opportune location to greet each patron as they line up to get food.

"Some people are hungry to have someone's attention and others take some time to build a rapport", she says as she hands out aspirin to patrons who request it. "I would hope that I touched patron's and volunteer's lives as I know they have touched mine".



Holiday Donations Needed

We are once again approaching the holiday season and are in need of holiday gifts for our patrons. Donations of the following items (new items only, please) will be accepted. Please **do not wrap the gifts**, and remember that **we have more men than women and more adults than children**.

Adult Gifts

Knit watch caps (black, gray, navy, or brown)

Gloves (large sizes)

Bath towel, washcloth, and bar of soap tied with ribbon

Men's white crew or tube socks

Hooded ponchos

Mini hygiene bags (razor, bar of soap, and wash cloth)

Men's hooded sweatshirts (large, extra large, or larger-black, gray, navy, or brown)

Children's Gifts

Hats

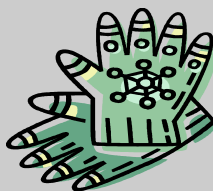
Scarves

Gloves

Kids Hooded Sweatshirts

(assorted sizes- no red, blue, or gold)

Stuffed animal/Beanie Baby toy



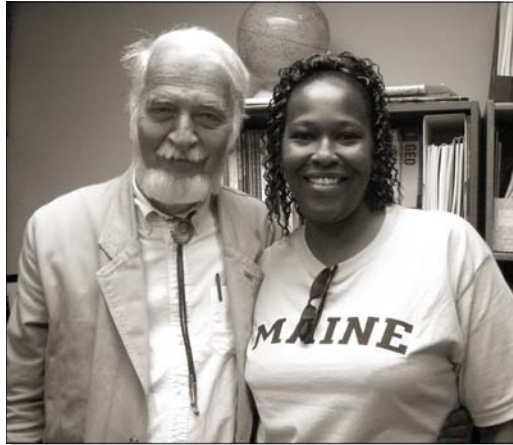
A Life's Work

Dr. Chris Hansen has made a deal with one of our Adult Education Program (AEP) students who had been a boxer. With a jovial smile Dr. Chris sits down for an interview, "I'll help him with poetry and he'll teach me how to box." With Dr. Hansen's good nature and quick wit, it is no wonder his students love him.

As a pediatrician to impoverished areas, he's seen a lot. In his book, *In the Name of the Children: The Life Story of a Pediatrician to the Poor*, Hansen gives an account of some of his incredible experiences, including service to the Civil Rights Movement and medical practice in American Indian reservations, Middle Eastern countries, the Caribbean, and destitute areas of the United States. He served as the chief pediatrician for the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) for 20 years and helped establish the Trenton Health Center.

When Lisa, one of his other students, was asked what it was like to work with him, she smiled warmly, "He's great. Very patient, very caring...He makes me laugh." Lisa happens to be our most recent GED recipient. "Chris always made me feel like I can do it. He gave me a lot of encouragement."

Dr. Hansen joined our AEP as a volunteer tutor two years ago. He stopped in to donate Christmas trees and immediately felt pulled to volunteer. "I saw a connection between some of the children I was trying to help and some of their parents and families that might come to eat at a place like TASK. Tutoring here is a shared time of learning...it has been a wonderful experience."



Dr. Chris Hansen poses with his student Lisa, TASK Adult Education Program's most recent GED recipient.

UPCOMING EVENTS

• Sept. 23rd 12:00 Celebrity Scrabble Tournament

Gallery 125 on S. Warren St., Trenton, NJ. Local celebrities will be playing Scrabble to benefit a charity of their choice. Councilman Jim Coston will be playing for TASK. For more information, email Eric at book_cellar@mindspring.com

• Oct. 22nd 3:00pm Joan Waite Performing: *Spirituals and Songs of Love: Mozart to Stevie Wonder*

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton on 50 Cherry Hill Rd. Princeton, NJ. Concert of spirituals, show tunes, and classic soul sung by Joan Waite, accompanied by Peter Lauffer. Ticket sales will benefit TASK. For more information, call the church office at (609)924-1604.



The Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

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P. O. Box 872
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(609) 695-5456 (phone)
(609) 695-1225 (fax)
www.trentonsoupkitchen.org

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