

## Did you know?

- Some of the graduates of the TASK Adult Education Program (AEP) are now in college and volunteer their services as AEP tutors.
- We offer the opportunity for homeless patrons to pick up their mail at TASK.
- We offer the opportunity for patrons to send and receive phone messages and faxes at TASK.

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## Faithful Stewards

### A Heartfelt Thank You

Every year, around 600 individuals come to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen to volunteer. Some are familiar faces who return each week or each month, some are new volunteers who are coming to TASK for the first time. Every day, about 40 people share their time and talent. Some tutor in our Adult Education Program, some sort in our pantry, and some share a smile as they pass food to patrons over the serving line. The service provided by these individuals is the backbone of TASK.

In fact, the soup kitchen originated with individuals in the community, most of them members of local congregations. Continuing to today, most of our volunteers come from area churches, temples, and mosques. "A large majority of our volunteers are from faith-based groups," says Cathy Ann Vandegrift, Assistant Director. "Without them, we wouldn't be able to do what we do, the soup kitchen wouldn't be what it is today."

TASK was formed in 1981 when a small group of people from various congregations and social service organizations joined together around the shared conviction that there were people going hungry in Trenton and something had to be done about it. It began in the basement of the First Methodist Church serving a few people and has grown to become a permanent facility on Escher Street that offers a wide array of programs as well as a satellite soup kitchen in south Trenton serving dinner three nights each week at the First Baptist Church. Many of the churches and synagogues that originally helped form TASK are still involved today, joined by a host of other local religious groups of various backgrounds and traditions.

"Why do people get involved? They want to help others", says a former member of the Board of Trustees who worked to originate TASK. This individual would like to remain anonymous. "We're not looking for publicity. We're just doing this because it's the right thing to do."

Local churches, synagogues, and mosques have been a major source of support for TASK, not only by sending volunteers to provide their time and skill but also by contributing financially. Both are necessary for the soup kitchen to survive.

Larry Apperson has been volunteering at TASK for the past nine years through his church, Princeton United Methodist. Larry's church sends about 50 people each year to volunteer. "I am a religious person", Larry stated, "Christ said 'Take care of my people, love your neighbor.' That's what we're doing here. We're just trying to give something back as small as it might be."

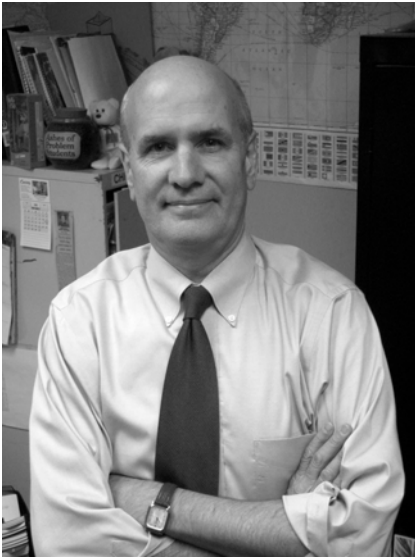
St. James Roman Catholic Church in Pennington is one of the congregations that has been supporting TASK from the beginning. Fr. Ron Bacovin acknowledged, "We try to be attentive to the soup kitchen in various ways. We ask confirmation classes to volunteer to raise consciousness. We also contribute funds. St James isn't unconcerned with what happens in Trenton...The church can't walk away from the concerns of the poor-- to do that would be to walk away from the sermons of Jesus."

Sue Rodgers came to TASK through her involvement at her church. She has been a member of the TASK Board of Trustees for the past few years.



*Each month, volunteers from Nassau Presbyterian Church and the Jewish Center of Princeton serve at TASK.*

## Meet Lee Seglem, President of TASK Board of Trustees



When Lee Seglem started donating to TASK, he never dreamed he'd become the President of the TASK Board of Trustees. In fact, he had been contributing to TASK through payroll deductions for years before stepping foot through the door. Lee admits, "After a couple of years of donating, I felt obligated to at least check it out."

Upon his first visit, he was impressed. "TASK is very multi-dimensional in services. It's not just a place that people go to eat a nutritious meal, but there is an adult education program, an arts program, a computer room, social work services...it provides a whole range of services that go well beyond physical hunger. TASK feeds people's minds. It helps people reach self-sufficiency in society. It's really a pretty impressive operation."

Seglem began volunteering regularly after his first visit. About a year later, he was approached by a board member and asked if he'd like to join. Two years later, Lee was voted Board President.

"My interest in TASK was to go there and do what they needed to have done. I wanted to make life easier for the people that go there."

Lee is currently working on a book about TASK with the larger issues related to poverty and hunger as a backdrop. "I think there's a compelling story to tell", Seglem admits. "The area that surrounds Trenton is a ring of wealth and plenty. We're fortunate to have an economy that enables many people to live very comfortable lives, but just minutes away you find people in the opposite situation. Twenty five years ago [when TASK was established], people came together to meet the fundamental needs of poor people. It's a compelling story of compassion and service."

"Right now, hunger and poverty are not high on the public agenda from what you read in newspapers, see on television, or hear from elected officials. As the numbers show, though, the problem is not getting better, it's getting worse. These are not easy issues or questions, but it doesn't help to turn our backs on it."

**TASK served 14,051 meals in September and 14,947 meals in October.**

## Wanted: Frozen Turkeys!

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

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



## A-TEAM Artwork on Display

Artwork from the A-TEAM Artists of Trenton co-op is being exhibited in a show at the Artworks gallery at 19 Everett Alley off Stockton Street from Friday November 17, 2006 until January 1st, 2007. The show, entitled "Trenton Visionaries", includes paintings, drawings, collages, found-object constructions, dolls and frames by 21 A-TEAM artists.

The artists are very grateful to Artworks for this wonderful opportunity and send special thanks to Gail Bracegirdle, Anne LaBate and the curator Elise Mannella for their many efforts on behalf of the A-TEAM. You can visit the gallery on Saturdays through December 31 from 12 noon to 5pm or by appointment.

The A-TEAM is also exhibiting their artwork in Murray Dodge Hall on the Princeton University campus from November 15 through November 31 as part of "Awareness of Hunger and Homelessness" observances. At the opening reception on the evening of November 15, A-TEAM artists will have a chance to meet students from Princeton's visual arts program and hear a talk by a sociology professor.

The A-TEAM is happy to join the University in this fund raising event for TASK and thanks Princeton's Student Volunteer Council for bringing attention to the problems of hunger and homelessness.



*RavenFeather, pictured above, is one of the 21 A-TEAM artists whose work will be on display at the Artworks show, "Trenton Visionaries," from November 17 through December 31, 2006.*

# Losing Your Keys Isn't Always a Bad Thing.

When Laney Sokolow reached into her purse after volunteering in February on the lunch serving line at TASK, she could not find the keys to her car. They were not locked in the cabin of the car either. She thought that the keys might be locked in her trunk, so she left a message with her husband who was at a business lunch in Philadelphia and waited. Laney thought that this would be a good opportunity to observe the Adult Education Program (AEP), a one-on-one tutoring program that runs nine times each week before and after lunch at TASK. She had considered volunteering her services as a tutor, but was concerned that her skills didn't match what was needed.

As she sat quietly in the dining room, one of our students asked Laney for help with her lesson. Laney apologized and explained that she was not a tutor. Laney then remembers the woman's smiling response, "You will be."

Laney tutored that student all afternoon. She was hooked. When her husband showed up with the spare key she was in no rush to go home. After the afternoon AEP session ended, she told Adult Education Coordinator Kelly Hansen that she'd be back next week and has been a regular tutor ever since.

With a background in elementary education, Laney is perfect for the job. The skills that our students are working on range from learning the alphabet to 12<sup>th</sup> grade algebra. Some of our students have a goal of passing the GED test this year, which is equivalent to a high school diploma, while others would like to be able to read to their grandchildren.

Laney is a terrific tutor. When asked about her students, she smiled and said, "I see them as heroes. These are wonderful people working against tough odds. They are really working hard



to overcome the negatives in the education system, in the world, and in life."

Laney Sokolow never did find her lost keys, but we're very glad she stayed that afternoon.

*Laney (left) tutors AEP student Lucinda.*

## Faithful Stewards, continued from page 1

"Being involved at the soup kitchen is something I had always wanted to do. When I joined Nassau Presbyterian Church, I heard about the volunteer groups that they send to TASK and it was the perfect opportunity. Being involved at TASK has made me an advocate. I read the newspapers differently; I go to the grocery store differently. It scares me that we have to expand the soup kitchen to meet the growing need."

Nassau Presbyterian Church was not only one of the groups that helped create TASK, but it also helped give life to the A-TEAM Artists of Trenton by staging their first art show six years ago. Sue Rodgers remembers that day clearly. "It was the first time that a lot of the church members realized how much more the work they did at TASK meant. There was an eye-opening realization that we weren't merely feeding people's bodies."

Another congregation that has been a steadfast supporter of TASK's work is Beth Chaim, a Jewish synagogue in West Windsor. Leslie Nagler has been a Beth Chaim volunteer each month for the past eight years. "We not only send a group of volunteers once a month, but we also donate toiletries and socks."

On Yom Kippur, the most sacred of Jewish holidays, Jews chant the words of Isaiah, who said "when you make sacrifice to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, the Lord shall guide you always." Nagler explains, "As a part of Yom Kippur, the Jewish day of fasting, we ask our congregates to donate food to the soup kitchen."

As part of the traditional festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, the Institute of Islamic Studies and the Muslim Communities of Mercer County celebrate the break in their month of fasting by providing a meal at TASK as well as other meals throughout the year.

Throughout the years, the support we've received from the faith-based community has done much more than allow TASK to provide meals. Through your volunteerism and contributions, you've allowed us to make actions speak louder than words.

## 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) are requested. Please **do not wrap the gifts**, and remember that **we have more men than women and more adults than children.**

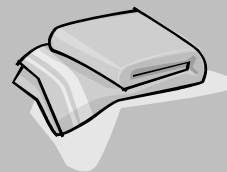


### Adult Gifts

- 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



## Touched By TASK



*Wendy is a patron, an Adult Education Program Student, and a member of the A-TEAM Artists of Trenton.*

When Wendy started coming to eat at TASK, she didn't know that, in addition to nutritious food, she'd also receive an education, a venue for artistic expression, and the ability to hear again. A few years ago she left her home in NYC and found herself in Trenton, NJ. She has been coming to TASK for the past four years.

Wendy became deaf in one ear at age eight when her mom hit her in the head with a metallic bat. She didn't think she would ever hear out of that ear again. About five months ago, Anne Hamilton, one of our social workers, set Wendy up with an appointment to have her hearing checked by Reginald McCrae, hearing specialist and TASK Adult Education Pro-

gram graduate. The hearing test proved that she was deaf in her left ear and was losing hearing in her right ear as well. With the test results and with Anne's assistance, she was approved by Medicaid to receive a transmitter for her left ear and a hearing aid for her right.

Wendy couldn't be happier. "I can hear everything now," she says with a smile. "People who talk low, the sound of vegetables being chopped in the kitchen, the toilet flushing... I can hear my kids cry, people on the phone... I'm so excited. I can hear everything."

About four months ago, Wendy became a student in the Adult Education Program (AEP). She is determined to get her GED. Two months ago, she joined the A-TEAM Artists of Trenton. "I signed up and I ended up getting a family. The Trenton Area Soup Kitchen - - everyone here - - this is my second family. This is my second home."



### The Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

72 ½ Escher Street  
P. O. Box 872  
Trenton, NJ 08605  
(609) 695-5456 (phone)  
(609) 695-1225 (fax)  
[www.trentonsoupkitchen.org](http://www.trentonsoupkitchen.org)

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Winter 2006 Newsletter

## UPCOMING EVENTS

•11/15/06 A-TEAM Artists of Trenton Art Show Opening Reception and Princeton University Sociology Lecture. Princeton University campus, Murray Dodge Hall  
For more information, please call (609) 921-1825.

•11/17/06 A-TEAM Artists of Trenton Art Show Opening Reception. Art-works gallery at 19 Everett Alley off Stockton St. in Trenton, NJ.  
6:00pm-9:00pm.

**"It is when you give of yourself, that you truly give."**

~ Kahlil Gibran

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