



KAIR

Keys Area Interdenominational Resources
Food Pantry and Social Services for those in Need in the Middle Keys

May 2009

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Director's Corner



I was recently listening to an interview with Nikki Giovanni, a renowned poet, talking about her book Bicycles: Love Poems. She was quoting from poems and since I was a captive audience riding in the car, it was easy to reflect and get "philosophical." A portion of her poem went like this:

*"I like Boiled turnips, Boiled potatoes,
Boiled rutabagas with butter and sea salt,
But not every day. I like Fried Virginia
flounder, Fried sand dabs, Fried smelts,
But usually only on Friday night," -*

Ms. Giovanni goes on in this vein and ends with:
*"In other words: I'm normal. So this is the
question: Why am I so enchanted with
you?"*

She described why passion for someone or something is sometimes hard to explain. I thought about how we feel about KAIR - those who work, volunteer, or support the constancy of the mission. It's something we do every day. We think about it in prayer, at social gatherings, in discussion with

friends and family. It has ended up being a huge part of who we are. And why is that?

My new friend and KAIR volunteer, Bill Ahtes, brought me some literature from an organization in his hometown of Salisbury, Maryland that is similar to KAIR. Joseph House explains that their mission is to promote stable family life. They write,

" There is no stability in the lives of most of our clients, so every person who comes to us presents a very special challenge. Our philosophy must express caring, sharing and nurturing, a combination of companion on the journey, parent, teacher, guide, listener, mentor, caretaker, motivator, encourager and friend. We must accept them and love them as they are but we must project confidence of a greater future for them as they develop their potential."

Stepping up to the challenge for others each day ends up profoundly impacting our own lives. We are blessed to have these opportunities to make even a small difference in someone else's life and in our community. So, there you have it. You could say we are "enchanted."

Letter Carriers "Stamp Out Hunger"

The National Association of Letter Carriers held their annual Stamp Out Hunger food drive on May 9th. Thank you to all the letter carriers that participated and thank you to all the nice folks who left non-perishable items at their mailboxes for pick-up. Approximately 3500 pounds of food was collected and this food was distributed to local organizations who serve hungry people. Summer is traditionally a hard time for food pantries and this collection will keep our shelves full for quite some time.

Thanks to ALL!



left to right: Trevor Wofsey, Tammy Daniels, George Lancaster, Ronda Threkeld, Paige Wofsey, Javier Zegarra. Carriers not pictured: Mary Belden, Phil Jones, Chanel Cowart, Veronica Johnson and Judy Gardiner

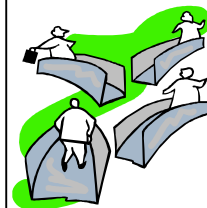
FURNITURE SOS! Several people are on a waiting list for furniture. If you have furniture in good condition to donate, please call KAIR. A dinette set, stove, sofa, and bedroom furniture are all badly needed. Transport can be arranged.

Keys Fisheries Hosts Event for Benefit of KAIR

Although the day started off with rain and gray skies, the sun finally came out and it was a day for great food and great music at the May 17th Keys Fisheries "Crustacean Vacation" event that benefitted KAIR. Over a thousand pounds of food was collected and delivered to the KAIR food pantry. Marathon's mayor Mike Cinque



and city manager Clyde Burnett were there to start things off along with the American Legion color guard. Many different bands played throughout the day and the dancing crowd enjoyed the music until well into the evening. This idea and all the planning came from Keys Fisheries employee Chris Byrne and supported by owner Gary Graves. Such a great day was had by all, we are hoping that we can return next year!



Social Security - Stepping Stone to Recovery

KAIR director, Marj Roberts, recently completed a two day Social Security training on how to assist local residents who have long-term disabilities complete the process for eligibility for benefits. In their experience, Social Security has found that often the most disabled in the population are the least likely to be able to successfully navigate the eligibility requirements. They now use the SOAR method, (Social Security, Outreach, Access and Recovery), to identify, train and collaborate with community partners to use Social Security as a "Stepping Stone to Recovery." KAIR is now a Monroe County partner and will be able to assist very disabled residents to access benefits in order to provide for much needed medical treatment.