



NEWS

GOOD NEWS

FROM MORAVIAN OPEN DOOR

The last news of Moravian Open Door (MOD) reported in *The Moravian Magazine* (October 2007) was of the flood of 21 inches of storm sewer water that inundated all basement areas of the building on East 18th Street, Manhattan, on August 8, 2007. Common room, kitchen, office, storeroom, hallway, and elevator were all hit with the deluge of filthy water; the task to clean up and restore was enormous. We

now have much good news to report.

Although Executive Director Darryl Williams and some volunteers made an initial cleanup of the terrible mess, health and safety concerns mandated that the major cleanup and restoration be carried out by a professional company, ServePro, directed by MOD's insurer. During all of August, September, and October, the basement areas were closed off to all residents while every permeable surface touched by the water was ripped out and all furniture and appliances were discarded. All the debris was handled as toxic waste and disposed of according to regulations. All wallboard was replaced, cabinets built, new kitchen appliances purchased and installed, and all surfaces (even ceilings) newly painted. Also during this time, the elevator, rendered inoperable by the flood, was restored to service.



Doris Schattschneider is a member of Advent Moravian Church, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and serves on the board of Moravian Open Door and also on the Committee for Development and Public Relations.

Fourteen churches and church organizations and 41 individuals responded to reports of the disaster with an outpouring of gifts totaling more than \$10,000. MOD is extremely grateful for the generous response that helped so much during the time of stress and inconvenience for residents and staff. These donations helped with providing the 42 residents with meals during the cleanup and restoration, and covered some of the uninsured expenses of refurbishing the common room and director's office. In normal circumstances, most residents would prepare their own meals in the kitchen. During the three months when there was no kitchen, they had access to three microwaves, a coffeemaker, and a water cooler in the reception area, and Darryl provided them with non-perishable food items and microwaveable meals.

On November 3, three months after the disaster, the basement common room and kitchen were re-opened to all residents; this was celebrated with a festive dinner provided by MOD. Three other dinners for residents were provided in November: a group of high school students from Sturgeon Bay Moravian Church, led by Jill Kolodziej, made a spaghetti dinner for clients, staff, and interns on Nov. 9; Grace Moravian Church (Queens) hosted a Thanksgiving dinner; and the confirmation class and elders from John Hus Moravian Church (Brooklyn) hosted a dinner on November 24.

The Thanksgiving dinner was an occasion for many thanks: for the restoration of the damaged building and for the caring work of director Darryl, case worker Janel Martin, and program coordinator Michael Ralling, in carrying out the mission of providing a safe and affordable residence for older adults



Grace Moravian Youth used the new kitchen and common room to serve a meal for residents.

while assisting them to make the transition from homelessness to independent living. And at this occasion, a special recognition was given to resident Ed Furs, who was saying goodbye because he was about to move into his own new studio apartment: another success story for MOD. His is a special story, worth telling.

Edward Furs (aka Ed) entered MOD in early December 2001. Within six months, the director became so impressed with Ed's willingness to ensure an atmosphere of community within the residence, Ed was hired as full-time building maintenance superintendent, with free rent and a small salary. Over the years, Ed did a fantastic job keeping up the maintenance of the building. He too had the misfortune of experiencing two (minor) basement floods that required his immediate attention. On January 1, 2007, Ed's position was phased out when MOD was forced to reduce operating costs, and Ed

(continued on next page)



Darryl Williams (left) stands with Edward Furs (right) a former MOD resident who now supports himself and lives on his own.

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became a paying resident. Ed's position was replaced with a newly established program FECS (Federation Employment and Guidance Service) that sends (without cost to MOD) teams of interns to provide custodial and other building services to MOD. Ed is elated about having his own apartment after so many years. Kristen Bodenstein, President of the MOD Board, noted "Ed has been a real gem and pleasure to have as part of the MOD family for so many years. We all wish him the best and hope that he returns often."

Moravian Open Door has many stories to tell, and offers many ways for church members and others to help. The MOD web site <www.moravianhouse.org>, launched last fall, gives information about MOD's mission and services, success stories, and ways to help. And the web site invites anyone to donate "online," via Paypal. Those who do online shopping can have their purchases earn donations to MOD by shopping via the

portal <www.Igive.com>, and selecting Moravian Open Door as their charity.

MOD, an outreach ministry of the Eastern District, receives no city, state, or Federal government funding for its work; it depends entirely on modest client fees (which cover only about half of its budget) and donations from church organizations and individuals. The Annual Appeal, in which each Eastern District church member in the U.S. receives a letter, is a very important source of funding. During the Christmas season, many churches participate in the "No room at the Inn" special offering for MOD. Some organizations and individuals sponsor a resident by sending a monthly stipend to MOD that augments the fees paid by the resident. (Children at Schoeneck Moravian Church, Nazareth, Pennsylvania, collect a "joyful noise" offering each month — they love to shake the change in the cans — and the donations are sent to MOD.)

Of course, MOD always welcomes volunteer help and visits by church groups or individuals to host a dinner or provide a special event. Gifts of items such as twin bed linens, personal care items for residents, cleaning supplies, and healthy snacks are always appreciated. For more information, contact Darryl Williams, Moravian Open Door, 347 E. 18th St., New York 10003, or email: <mod18@juno.com>, or telephone 212.995.5810.

Moravian Open Door looks forward to a bright 2008, with refreshed facilities, enthusiastic staff, and anticipation of many more happy goodbyes to residents moving on to productive independent living. Shortly after a resident moves out, a new one is welcomed; this important ministry is changing lives of the homeless one person at a time.