

## **AARON MCNEIL CENTER**

To the 180<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Kentucky

As a Jubilee Center, Aaron McNeil continues to provide crisis relief assistance to the poor, underprivileged, and individuals with short-term basic human needs in Hopkinsville and Christian County. In addition its mission is to provide programs, which promote the moral, intellectual, social, and physical development of both youth and adults.

Successful programs at the center are having a positive impact on the youth of our community. The After-School Tutoring Program helped a group of students improve their grades and self-esteem. These children also received a book each week to go into their personal library. Our Summer Youth Program enrolled twenty boys and girls five days a week for six weeks. We were very fortunate to receive a Forward Fund Grant to provide concentrated reading activities during this time. The most exciting part of “Reading Rocks” was all the background knowledge that the volunteers shared as the children explored new subjects and learned new vocabulary. We were fortunate to have members of Grace Episcopal Church volunteer in these endeavors.

The annual Christmas Party co-sponsored by Grace Episcopal provided toys and clothes for twenty-nine children. It was a joyous occasion in the church parish hall, complete with great cookies, the singing of carols, tremendous fellowship, and an appearance by Santa.

We continued to help our crisis relief clients move toward self-sufficiency by providing Budget Counseling classes. These classes are held quarterly and are required for those who have received assistance and are asking for help again. In the past year we have had twenty-five to thirty people attend. Some of the clients are now managing on their own.

Our Food Pantry has seen more use as several major industries closed. Our pantry is stocked by donations from many churches in the community including St. John’s United Methodist Church and by the postal workers “Stamp Out Hunger” food drive.

Aaron McNeil has partnered with many in the community including Hopkinsville Community College. Two students did their internships at the Center. We also had two individuals working under the “Experience Works” program. We also partnered with the “Kentucky Works” Program. The Center is a training place but also benefits from what these students have to offer.

One of our most exciting events in the life of the Center is the annual “Friends of Aaron McNeil’ luncheon which took place the first Sunday in January. Over 250 people joined us in this successful fundraiser. One of the highlights of the luncheon is the “Friend of Aaron McNeil Award.” Our “Friend” award went to Beth Rhone, a longtime board member and volunteer. Beth was an active member of Grace Church and the Diocese of Kentucky.

As the year ends, we seek to creatively meet the challenges of an aging building and staffing needs as we continue to serve our community.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cornelia Belle, Director