

March 2015



# DIAKONIA INC.

Help for Today & Hope for Tomorrow

[www.diakoniaoc.org](http://www.diakoniaoc.org)

## Director's Note

Dear friends,

As you may have read in our January issue, 2014 was quite a busy year for us. Our oldest and most well-known program, emergency housing, was consistently at capacity. The Supportive Services for Veterans and Emergency Solutions Programs were also incredibly Successful, helping record numbers of veterans and those in housing crisis in our community.



We have included numbers for you to see exactly how many people in the area are receiving services from Diakonia, and how the work we are doing together with the kindness of the community is affecting those who need it most.

Speaking of kindness, we want to sincerely thank the contractors in the areas who have given generously of their time and expertise in making Diakonia a safe and comfortable place. In January and February, with the help of a local contractor and our willing guests, we were able to renovate two offices and the communal living room in our Main House. With out staff working 24 hours a day, and up to forty guests using our facilities, this project has made a huge improvement to our house. The fresh paint and brand new floor in each room look stunning. We are so appreciative of those who donated the time, material, and labor to maintain our home (including guests and staff!). Your kindness is felt by everyone connected to Diakonia!

All the best,

*Claudia*  
Claudia Nagle  
Executive Director  
Diakonia, Inc.



## "Empty Bowl" Dinner Event

*When: MARCH 21st*

*Time: 5-8pm*

The "Empty Bowl" project dinner event has the purpose of showing the attending community members about how many empty bowls there are in the world.

No registration is needed as it is open to the public, and the entrance fee is only \$20 per person.

The Art League of Ocean City will be hosting the dinner. They are located on 94th street off of Coastal Highway.

For more information, you can contact either Diakonia at 410-213-0923 or the Art League at 410-524-9433.



*Photos courtesy of [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com)*

## Diakonia By the Numbers

- 24 hours a day staff is on duty
  - 34 new volunteers serviced
  - 6,021.5 volunteer hours completed in the thrift store
  - 2,967 volunteer hours completed in the pantry
  - 22,585 food bags were distributed in the 2014 fiscal year
  - 61,685 meals were served to guests in the housing program
  - 161 adults housed in emergency housing
  - 16 children housed in emergency housing
  - 59 veteran households served including:
    - 32 children
  - \$1,290 average financial assistance to...
    - 28 veteran households
- But Unfortunately...**
- 3,319 unmet housing requests
    - 9 daily average

## Students and the Community



Photo by Sara Nickoles

Pocomoke High School students visited with the United Way. During which, they were able to tour Diakonia and then spend multiple hours volunteering by making personal hygiene bags.

### “Empty Bowls” Project

Diakonia and The Art League of Ocean City partnered together for an inspiring event called the Empty Bowl Project, sponsored by First Shore Federal Bank, where the purpose is to creatively remind people of hunger in the world.

This event began with seven dates throughout January and February where people from the community could head to the Art League of Ocean City on 94th street and be led in a quick ceramics class in order to create a bowl. A special eighth date was held specifically for the guests at Diakonia to make bowls in order to contribute to the cause.

To finish off the project, a soup dinner is going to be held at The Art League on Saturday, March 21, from 5-8pm. The dinner is open to the public and no registration is needed. At the dinner there will be soup, bread, and desserts donated by local restaurants; the cost to attend the dinner is only 20 dollars. At the end of the dinner, each person can take home one of the empty bowls created by the community, as a reminder of all the empty bowls and hungry stomachs in the world.

Photo courtesy of [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com)

## Pantry with the Community

A prime example of a community coming together in order to support a great cause is demonstrated by Diakonia's food pantry.

The pantry is able to feed not only the guests residing at Diakonia (which is approximately 60,000 meals a year), but it also helps those in the community who may need food assistance.

When it comes to how the food pantry functions, the phrase “volunteers and donations” could be a summary. However, it is far from a fair description as so many community members contribute.

The pantry first begins with the pallets of food that the government sends, and the \$2,200/yr budget, which will buy approximately 10-15 gallons of milk per week, to supplement the diets.

However, this does not provide a complete meal, which is why food drives from schools and other organizations are extremely helpful. These add a variety of mostly canned foods to the pantry selection in order to provide meals that encompass the basic food groups.

The pantry is also stocked by donations from organizations, members, and businesses throughout the community. Often the Department of Natural Resources donates fresh fish that are deemed as overflow. Meanwhile when it comes to fresh produce, farmers donate a portion of their harvests as well. A local food show was held in Ocean City which donated food by the truckload. Also, nearby businesses including Panera, Chipotle, Starbucks, Wawa, Outback, Carrabba's, and Food Lion all contribute items to keep the food pantry functioning at its best.

While food is greatly accepted as a donation, empty grocery bags are also greatly needed. According to Susan Blaney, facilities coordinator, over 40,000 of these bags are used a year in order to give out a meal in an easy-to-carry way.

After constant donations, only half of the work is done. Now the food is ready for the pantry. This is where selfless volunteers take the reins and pick up donations from the businesses listed above and organize all the food onto the shelves in the Main House. Because the pantry operates daily, sorting and stocking is a never-ending process. Every two days more food needs to be cycled from storage into the pantry. Worcester County residents are able to access the pantry's resources every 30 days, preferably from 10am-4pm. Diakonia can also refer residents of other counties to pantries closer to their homes.

Overall, the community comes together with donations and volunteered time to help Diakonia produce a food pantry that is always ready to help anyone in need.

Photo by Sara Nickoles

#### Veterans Office

Unit 100  
9748 Stephen Decatur Highway  
Ocean City, MD 21842

#### Main House

12747 Old Bridge Road  
Ocean City, MD 21842

\*food pantry is located here\*

#### “Used to Be Mine”

12507 Sunset Avenue  
Ocean City, MD 21842

\*please take all donations to main house\*