

# People

Millie Kear

## At 82, this gal's important to the Thresholds program

By WALLY KOCHER  
Staff Correspondent

Anyone who thinks elderly people are unable to contribute to society has obviously never met Millie Kear of Dallas.

Millie is a volunteer with the Thresholds program at the State Correctional Institution at Dallas. She began working with the program six years ago at the age of 76 and is still helping out at the young age of 82.

Even though Millie doesn't interact with the prisoners, or "clients" as they call them, she campaigns for the program and recruits other volunteers.

The Thresholds program is the brain child of Dr. Milton Burglass. A psychiatrist from New Orleans, LA, Dr. Burglass began to realize the needs of the prisoners around him while he was incarcerated in prison for cheating in a financial deal during the 1960's. After leaving prison, Dr. Burglass put his ideas into action and began the Thresholds program.

The program is a 10-week course in decision-making and problem-solving and is taught to inmates by volunteers from the local community.

Each volunteer goes through a basic training period consisting of one weekend. During the intensive training, the volunteers learn everything in two days that the prisoners learn during the 10-week course.

The course is taught one night a week and, on a second evening, each client meets with his volunteer to review the lesson.

The seven steps in decision-making taught by the volunteers are: Define the Situation, Explore the Possibilities, Evaluate Possibilities, Choosing a Criteria, Decide, Action and Ratification.

The Thresholds program began locally at the Dallas Correctional Institution in February, 1978. Since then, workshops have been held twice a year for the past six years.

According to Sister Barbara Craig, Co-Director of Thresholds, the program has been very successful at the prison. It has been welcomed and respected by both inmates and administration.

Sister Craig, along with her Co-Director Ingrid Prater, is currently sifting through about 50 applications from the inmates to determine which ones will be chosen for the program. Preference is given to those inmates who will be paroled soon, however, others who will be incarcerated for longer periods of time are also considered.

"When matching each client with his volunteer, there's a lot of faith involved," said Sister Craig.

It appeared to be a good match when Millie Kear met her clients as she has had two clients that she actually met with on a one-to-one basis and three others to whom she has written.

"I found the program to be illuminating and rewarding," Millie beamed. "I learned far more than they (the inmates) did."

Millie said she received personal satisfaction from helping her fellow citizens, and she felt she had shown the inmates some other still cares.

At the conclusion of the 10-week course it is imperative that contact between the client and volunteer is stopped.

Millie admits, however, that she did hear from one of her clients after he had been paroled. "He sent me a necklace that I wear from a state out west," she said. After that, Millie never heard from him again.

It's obvious that Millie is a devout believer in the Thresholds program.

"Just give me a box to stand on, and I'll tell anyone how wonderful this program is," she lectured.

For more information on this program, write Thresholds, Box 71, Dallas, PA 18612, or call Jackie Sheehan at 675-0675 or Richard Nash at 287-8195.

With Joan Kingsbury

## Around town

675-0835

I SPOKE TO VERONICA FARNOLA, who has been instrumental in getting local businesses to sell daffodils for the American Cancer Society on March 23, and she mentioned a few more businesses that are participating: Dallas Center Hardware; Carol Eason's Beauty Salon; United Penn Bank; Sam Roberts Hair Salon.

OVERBROOK ROAD RESIDENT JOHN F. SHEEHAN JR., executive director of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce was named to the advisory panel for the Public Involvement and Education on Radiation program of the Pennsylvania State University.

The advisory panel will review the need for statewide educational programs related to low-level radioactive waste disposal and radiation. It will review and recommend specific program activities and projects.

The program was developed to provide educational programs in response to public interest and concern over the disposal of low-level radioactive waste in Pennsylvania.

CAROL HESSON, family counselor at Clearbrook Lodge recently conducted a lecture on Alcoholism, a Family Affair at College Misericordia. Additional upcoming lectures include Drug Interaction, Wednesday, April 4, and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Thursday, April 26. These lectures are free to the public and are scheduled for 8:45 p.m. in Misericordia's science building.

Nancy Freda is chairwoman of the lecture series. She is a junior at the college majoring in occupational therapy.

GEORGE GUTHRIE CONYNGHAM

GHAM of Trucksville has been selected by the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick of Greater Wilkes-Barre as the organization's man of the year.

Conyngham was honored at the annual dinner of the Friendly Sons on St. Patrick's Day.

Conyngham is president of Eastern Pennsylvania Supply Company and the C.B. Scott Company, Scranton. A graduate of Yale University he served in the U.S. Marine Corps in the South Pacific Theater in World War II and in the Korean Conflict, receiving the Purple Heart for wounds sustained in combat.

A member of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Conyngham is associated with numerous organizations including the YMCA, Pennsylvania Economy League, Blue Cross-Blue Shield, Children's Service Center, American Red Cross, Wyoming Valley Historical Society, Vice-Chairman of the Luzerne County Republican Committee, he is a trustee and board member of the Veterans Medical Center, Wilkes-Barre and Robert Packer Hospital, Sayre.

DOUGLAS IDE, a sophomore at Lake-Lehman High School has been selected to attend the Hugh O'Brien Youth Foundation State Leadership Conference in Lancaster.

An honors student, Douglas is a member of the National Honor Society, the Lake-Lehman Band, the wrestling team, track team and is president of his class. He is a member of the EYC Prince of Peace Church, Dallas.

Douglas is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Ide of RD 2, Hunlock Creek.

CONGRATULATIONS TO FOUR COLLEGE MISERICORDIA food and nutrition majors who were recent recipients of four-year scholarships from Custom Management Corp. Kingston. They are Colleen Bergstrasser, Lori Olaf, Christine

Kalinay and Maureen Hannon.

BEST WISHES TO THE FOLLOWING LOCAL COUPLES who have announced their engagements: Mary Reistetter and Douglas Ehret; Pamela Selingo and Dr. Arthur S. Dixon.

Mary, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew C. Reistetter, 2 Florence St., Binghamton, N.Y. is a graduate of Binghamton Central High School, State University College, Oneonta and Marywood College. She is a registered dietician employed by ARA services, Dallas School District.

Doug, a graduate of Lake-Lehman High School is employed at Payne Printery, Inc., as a photo lithographer.

Mary and Doug will be married in October in St. Cyril's Church, Binghamton, N.Y.

Pamela, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Selingo, Overbrook Ave., Dallas, is a Chi Omega graduate of the University of Pittsburgh where she earned a bachelor of science degree in geology and education. Pamela attended the Institute of Spanish Studies in Valencia, Spain and undertook graduate studies at Robert Morris College and Duquesne University. She is employed by the Beaver County School District, Pittsburgh.

Dr. Dixon, son of Mrs. Karl Hale Dixon and the late Karl Hale Dixon, Mt. Kisco, N.Y. is a graduate of State University of New York, Upstate Medical Center, Syracuse, N.Y. where he received his doctor of medicine degree. He also holds a bachelor of science degree in business from Fordham University. Presently he is associated with Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters, Norfolk, Va., as a pediatrician.

Pamela and Arthur will be married in St. John's Orthodox Church, Nanticoke.

## Slovak Society organizes

The Slovak Heritage Society of Northeastern Pennsylvania announces its formal organization.

The purpose of the Society is to promote an awareness of Slovak Culture among all people through education and social interaction.


Although the Society has just formally organized, its activities began in 1975. At that time a special exhibit of Slovak Art was being held at the William Penn Museum in Harrisburg. Under the direction of Trude Check, a small choir of 25 voices prepared a program of Slovak Music and thus began the first of the cultural activities of the Slovak Heritage Society.

On Sunday, April 8, there will be a Pisaniky (egg-decorating) class at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, 667 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre. The Artistic Director of the Society David Lepore, a member of the International Egg Art Guild will be the instructor.

The Society has sponsored local appearances by visiting artists and with its own folk group known as SPEV has appeared many times before a wide range of audiences in the northeastern part of Pennsylvania. (Maria Jozef Manor in Danville, Luzerne County Folk Festival, Fine Arts Fiesta, Valley Crest, Veterans Hospital, and the Holiday Fair at the Luzerne County Court House).

SPEV is a group of 20 adults who perform a program of Slovak folk songs staged with costumes and accompanied by piano and accordion.

If interested in becoming a member of the Slovak Heritage Society please write Slovak Heritage Society of Northeastern Pennsylvania, P.O. Box 5004, Station "A", Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18710-5004.



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