

# MU students offer food aid to Noxen residents

Fueled by a desire to make a difference in the region, the Misericordia Campus Ministry has organized a year-long community outreach program to assist those in need in the nearby community of Noxen.

The community, approximately 11 miles from the MU campus, has a significantly lower income level compared to the national average and a higher percentage of residents and families living near or below the poverty level, according to data provided by the 2000 U.S. Census.

Community services in the small rural community of approximately 1,630 have been stretched by governmental budget cuts and recent flooding caused by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee that did severe damage to the local roads and infrastructure.

Student volunteers are providing much-needed assistance to a variety of organizations and populations in their neighboring community.

Spearheading and coordinating the effort is Misericordia stu-

dent Chelsea Mixon, a social work major from Bethlehem, who has undertaken the Noxen project as part of an internship with the Social Work Department.

Just a few weeks into the academic semester, Mixon immediately stepped in and helped coordinate student volunteers who assisted with flood clean-up efforts at dozens of homes in the community following Tropical Storm Lee.

"Chelsea was a God-send during the flooding," says Rev. Linda Bryan, pastor of the Noxen United Methodist Church. "If it wasn't for her helping bring student volunteers to our area, people would still be trying to clean out their houses."

Mixon is also working with Pastor Bryan, coordinating student volunteers each week at the Pastor's Food Pantry where an average of 60 to 80 families in the region are served each month. She also assists Pastor Bryan on visits to elderly homebound residents of the region and is coordinating assistance from students in the

health science majors, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, nursing and speech-language pathology, as needed.

Under Mixon's direction, Misericordia volunteers also helping organize and sort clothing at the community's Clothes Closet, a clothing bank set up by the Community Development Corporation of Noxen, Kunkle and Ruggles, located in the Old Schoolhouse Building. Mixon and a group of students recently filled a van with clothing from the Bloomsburg area and delivered it to the Clothes Closet as a part of their volunteer efforts.

Misericordia students Sarah Munley '13, an early childhood and special education major from Vernon, N.J., and Alina Busch, a social work major from Waldorf, Md., have also established an after-school tutoring program in grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 at the Lake-Noxen Elementary School. The tutoring takes place on Mondays and Tuesdays throughout the semester.

The Misericordia University



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Chelsea Mixon, right, accepts food for storage from Polly James in the Pastor Byron Food Pantry, Noxen. The Misericordia University intern has coordinated food relief efforts in Noxen.

chapter of Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society recently held a book drive on campus and plans to donate a portion of the books to the flood-damaged Noxen library along with two others in the region that were affected by the recent flooding. More than 1,000 books were collected during the one-month effort and will be distributed to the Noxen and West Pittston libraries and the library of the

flooded Holy Rosary School in Durysa.

Mixon says the student outreach in the Noxen community will continue throughout the spring semester. One of her goals is to increase the level of help to the library and clothing bank, services desperately needed in the small, rural community.

According to 2000 U.S. census data, the median income for a family in Noxen Township was

\$35,833, compared to \$50,046 in the U.S. The per capita income for the township was \$14,488, compared to \$21,587 across the country.

In the community, 13.8 percent live below the poverty line, compared to 9.20 percent nationally. The rate of individuals in the community who live below the poverty line is 17.1 percent, compared to the U.S. rate of 12.4 percent.

## OBITUARIES

**ANDERSON** - June E., 78, formerly of Dallas, died Wednesday, December 7, 2011, at the United Methodist Homes Wesley Village Campus, Jenkins Township.

She was born in Toms River, N.J., and was employed by the Dallas Area School District, working in the cafeteria at the Westmoreland Elementary School until her retirement in 1985.

Surviving are daughters, Diane Golightly, Shavertown; Heidi Wagner, Shavertown; Tamara Jenkins, Dallas; five grandchildren; one great-granddaughter; sister, Rose Johnston, Williamsport, Md.; brother, Edward Hewett, Shippensburg; nieces and nephews.

Memorial donations to United Methodist Homes Wesley Village Campus, 209 Roberts Rd., Pittston, PA 18640 or to the Hospice of the Sacred Heart, 600 Baltimore Dr., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702.

**DENMON** - Kenneth D., 81, of Beaumont, died Monday, December 5, 2011, in the Wilkes-Barre General Hospital after a short illness.

He was born September 12, 1930, in Forty Fort, and was a graduate of Beaumont High School, class of 1948. In 1950, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served for four years on the USS Menard during the Korean Conflict.

Prior to his retirement, he was employed at Klein Auto Parts of Tunkhannock for over 30 years. He was a member of the Noxen United Methodist Church.

Surviving are his mother, Julia Hilbert Denmon, of Beaumont; his children, Rick, Monroe Township; Mark, Noxen; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; brother, Sherwood, Upper Black Eddy; nieces and nephews.

Memorial donations to the Noxen United Methodist Memorial Fund, 3390 SR 29S, Noxen, PA 18636.

**EDWARDS** - Nancy S., 85, formerly of Wilkes-Barre, died on Wednesday, December 7, 2011, at her residence at The Village at Greenbriar, Dallas.

She was born January 5, 1926, in Kingston, graduated from Wyoming Seminary and attended Hood College, Frederick, Md. She then graduated from Drexel University, Philadelphia.

She was an instructor in the practical nursing program at Wilkes-Barre Vo-Tech. She was a member of Church of Christ United, Kingston. She also was a member of the Luzerne County Historical Society.

Surviving are a son, T.H., Camp Hill; a daughter, Debra Evans, Kingston Township; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; nieces and nephews.

Memorial donations to the American Red Cross, 256 N. Sherman St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702.

**FRITZGES** - Beverly S., 84, of Lakeside Nursing Center, Dallas, and formerly of Shavertown, died Sunday, December 4, 2011, at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center, Plains Township.

She was born in Scranton on Feb. 18, 1927, was a graduate of West Pittston High School, class of 1943 and of College Misericordia, Dallas, class of 1947, with a degree in education.

She was employed as a teacher at several local school districts. She was a member of the Trucksville United Methodist Church.

Surviving are her sons, James, Dallas; Barry, Wilkes-Barre; sister, Margaret Mitchell, Lake Winola; nieces, nephews and cousins.

Memorial donations to the Luzerne County SPCA.

**KINNEY** - Evans D., 87, of Harveys Lake, died Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, at the Meadows Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Dallas.

He was born on Oct. 13, 1924, in Hanover Township, was a sergeant of the United States Army and a veteran of World War II and the Korean War.

Surviving are his wife of 57 years, the former Theresa P. Spornoga; sons, Barry and Daniel.

**KISHBACH** - Linda Jane, 54, of Shavertown, died Saturday, December 3, 2011, in the Hospice of the VNA at St. Luke's Villa, Wilkes-Barre.

She was born in Bristol Township, Bucks County, was a graduate of Dallas High School class of 1975 and a Magna Cum Laude graduate of Misericordia University. She was employed by Genesis Health Care as an occupational therapist, working at Little Flower Manor, Wilkes-Barre.

She was very active with Candy's Place, Forty Fort, and its various support groups.

Surviving are her son, Mathew Joseph, Shavertown; three grandchildren; step-son, Justin Rosser, Wilkes-Barre; sister, Carol Ann

Davis, Kingston; brother, Christopher W. Davis, Tunkhannock; nieces and nephews.

**LYONS** - Theresa Austin, 82, of Washington Square Apartments, died Tuesday, December 6, 2011, at Mercy Center in Dallas after a short illness.

She was born March 26, 1929, in Wilkes-Barre. She retired from Mercy Hospital, where she was a unit secretary.

A member of the Parish of Our Lady of Fatima, she was a communicant at the Church of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception.

Surviving are her children, Judy McCray, Cindy Flynn and Jim; five grandsons; two great-grandsons; and sisters, Aileen Heck, Margaret Eckert, Mary Hannon and Betty McEvoy.

Memorial donations to the Sisters of Mercy, PO Box 369, Dallas, PA 18612.

**POWELL** - Edward S., 81, of Idetown Road, Dallas, died Friday, December 9, 2011, at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital.

He was born in Wanamie and graduated from Newport High School, class of 1947. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict.

He had resided on Idetown Road in Dallas for the past 56 years. Prior to his retirement, he was employed as a salesman for Whiteman Tower Paper Co. Earlier, he was employed by Zoeller Paper Company.

He was a 50-year member of Idetown United Methodist Church. He was past president of the Lehman Fire Company and was active with the Irem Temple for 50 years, serving as Potentate in 1983. He was captain of the Arab Emeritus Patrol for many years. He was a member of George M. Dallas Lodge No. 531 F&AM and Caldwell Consistory, Bloomsburg.

Surviving are his wife of 61 years, the former Dorothy Ogin; sister, Barbara Haydock, Alden; nieces and nephews.

**SIMCHICK** - Ashley, of Dallas, died suddenly in her home on Sunday, December 4, 2011.

She was born in Kingston on January 2, 1986. She was a 2004 graduate of Dallas Senior High School and was employed as a

veterinary technician.

Surviving are her parents, Jill Ketchel, Swoyersville; and John Simchick, Shavertown; her stepfather, John Ketchel; step-mother, Lijang Simchick; sister, Mallo-ry; maternal grandparents, Do-

nald and Blodwen Shaffer; paternal grandparents, John and Antoinette Simchick.

Memorial donations to the Luzerne County SPCA or to the Blue Chip Animal Shelter.

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