



# GOMOC NEWS

“Agency of Last Resort” Genesee Orleans Ministry of Concern

Spring 2006

## ONE OF OUR OWN

The Ministry of Concern grew out of the Migrant Ministry committees of the churches in Orleans and Genesee Counties in the nineteen fifties, a time when the seasonal migration of farm workers to this area was high.

When farm mechanization reduced the need for hand labor, summer migration gradually declined and many workers and their families resettled in our area out of this migrant stream. They faced many new problems like discrimination in jobs, housing, even survival. To meet their year-round needs, the committees formed the Genesee-Orleans Ministry of Concern. In order to work with them and all of the economically poor of the two county area, the organization was incorporated in Albion in June of 1968.

As a child, Bridgett’s (one of our own employees) family used the resources available at the Ministry of Concern to try to better their life. Bridgett is now the working Advocate for the Genesee Orleans Ministry of Concern here in Albion. She has been very involved with the organization both as a person who once utilized our services and as an employee.

Her family migrated to Piedmont Farms in Holley, New York during the summer and Ft. Pierce, Florida during the winter. At that time they were classified as “Migratory Farm Workers” by the Department of Labor. In 1973, their classification changed to “Seasonal Workers”, as they stayed in New York State year-round. When school was out, Bridgett and her three younger siblings would go out into the fields with their parents. Bridgett would work along side her mother while she also took care of the younger siblings. By the time she was twelve years old, Bridgett received her working papers and her first paycheck for picking cucumbers and tomatoes. She then was promoted to the hourly pay job of keeping track of what and how much other workers picked on the farm. While school was in session, she would pick in the fields in the afternoon, during summer she worked the fields everyday from 7 a.m. till 5 p.m.

In 1976, Bridgett graduated from Holley High School and continued working on the farm with her family. In 1978 she became part of the Rural Opportunities program where she received work experience as an Outreach Worker. Because of her background she was able to go out to labor camps and talk with the people there, understanding their issues. In 1981, Bridgett made the trip back to Florida to be married. She returned to Holley with her new husband and daughter in 1983 where they worked once again on Piedmont Farms. She soon became the Rural Opportunities Alcohol Outreach Worker where she was later promoted to the Employment and Training Specialist.

Bridgett has spent the last twenty years working with the poor, and is now the Advocate at the Ministry of Concern. She works very well with the families and people involved here as she is able to relate with them on a more personal level because of her history. Bridgett’s story is proof that with hope and hard work, great things can stem from humble beginnings.

## Laid Off Success

### One in Seven Rural Americans is Poor

Many family farms are being driven out of business by globalization and farm subsidies causing people living in rural areas to be more at risk for poverty. One in seven rural Americans is poor and almost one third of those become food insecure during some point in the year. Globally 75 percent of the 842 million hungry people live in rural areas.

People living in rural areas around the world have one thing in common—they are more likely to be hungry and poor than other people. It appears that people in rural areas do not receive much opportunity. Government believes them to be low priority.

All people who have been assisted by GOMOC come from our rural community. Your donations help your neighbor.

E is a 55 year old member of our community, working in a manufacturing position who found herself laid off. Without family in the area nor income she found it difficult to pay her bills. She applied for public assistance, but there is a 30 day wait. She became depressed and very discouraged not knowing how she was going to support herself.

E needed medication for blood pressure and diabetes but did not have any health insurance. DSS referred E to GOMOC.

We assisted her in getting her prescriptions filled. Time was also spent encouraging her to seek other possibilities of employment by learning new job skills or going back to school.

E was very grateful for the assistance received and assured us that she would be in touch to let us know how her future is looking.





Hello! I'd like to introduce myself, I am Jori Van-Nostrand, the new coordinator for the Just Friends Program. I am so excited to be here! I feel blessed to be working with the people here at the Ministry of Concern. My first order of business in the program is to find mentors for children on our waiting list.

I have visited with many different businesses in the community from schools to banks where I spoke of our Just Friends program and our need for mentors – we have over 35 children waiting for a match.

January was National Mentoring Month. On January 21<sup>st</sup> a celebration, including cake and punch was held for our mentors and children. The mayor of Albion signed a proclamation for our program. We'd like to thank Blooms Flower Shop, First Niagara, and HSBC for their donations.

We have many fun activities planned for the months ahead. Please call now to become a mentor. Eight hours a month will bring happiness to you and make a huge difference in a child's life. Call me at 589-9210 to setup a time with you or your group.



Dear Friends,

As we celebrate spring and Easter we are again renewed. The sunlit days, the appearance of the crocus, the daffodil and the tulip wakens our spirits to a new life. Easter is always, for me, a time of beginning again – a time for waking up and starting anew- a time for a “this time I'll get it right” resolution.

At the GOMOC we see so many people who want and need to begin anew. Of course, only they make the decision “to get it right” this time. They come to us for help and because of your continued support there is help available. Thank you.

Let us continue to pray for one another that our Easter renewal will contribute to a new life for the people of our world.

Gratefully,  
Marian M. Adrian, GNSH

# ANNUAL DINNER

**May 18th, 6:00PM**

American Legion  
131 South Main Street  
Albion, NY 14411



**Buffet**

**Music**

**Door prizes**

**Auction**

## Happenings

**Tuesday, April 18th Pizza Hut fundraiser in Batavia**—they will donate 20% of the nights sales to us.

**Thursday, May 18th Annual Dinner** — American Legion Hall, 131 South Main St. Albion

**August 9—14 Salvation Army Camp**

Watch for upcoming details on a musical festival to benefit us.



Look for cell phone boxes around Genesee and Orleans County - deposit your old phones, we make money.

## **GIFTS GIVEN TO THE MINISTRY OF CONCERN**

Between October 16, 2005 and February 26, 2006

- **A gift was given in honor of Charles and Lynne Koller in celebration of their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary by Mary Grace Demarse.**
- **A gift was given in honor of Sister Marian Adrian by Joann Hess.**
- **A gift was given in honor of Sister Marian Adrian by Susan Locke.**
- **A gift was given in honor of Kevin G. Smith by his children.**
- **A gift was given in honor of Ann Emmans by the First Presbyterian Church of Batavia.**
- **A donation was made in memory of Clara Smith by Rose Kennedy.**
- **A donation was made in memory of Bob Cahoon by Donna Cahoon.**
- **A donation was made in memory of Barbara (Leighton) Frisch by Norinne Fiegl.**
- **A donation was made in memory of Robert J. Vogel by Norinne Fiegl.**
- **A donation was made in memory of Charles and Viola Adrian by Donald and Mary Brown.**
- **A donation was made in memory of Ann Zeis by Donald and Mary Brown.**
- **A donation was made in memory of Ann Zeis by Marian Adrian, GNSH.**
- **A donation was made in memory of William Shanahan by Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Smith. GNSH.**
- **A donation was made in memory of Gary Luczak by Mr. and Mrs. William Heyen.**
- **A holiday donation was made in the name of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Safe by Mr. And Mrs. Bernard Yoffredo.**
- **A holiday donation was made in the name of Mr. Edward Carlo by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Yoffredo.**
- **A holiday donation was made in the name of Mr. and Mrs. R. Bernard Yoffredo by Mr. And Mrs. Bernard Yoffredo.**

The Genesee-Orleans Ministry of Concern will send a sympathy card acknowledging your memorial gift to the family of the deceased relative or friend. The name of the deceased will be printed in the following newsletter with your name as the memorial donor. The newsletter will be sent to you and to the family of the deceased.

*We regret any errors or omissions in this list. Please inform us of any changes or mistakes so that they may be corrected.*

**GENESEE-ORLEANS  
MINISTRY OF CONCERN, INC.**  
“Agency of Last Resort”



Arnold Gregory Memorial Complex  
243 South Main Street, Suite 271  
Albion, New York 14411-1644

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From the desk of the Executive Director...

As we approach this time of the year, we begin to look for signs of spring. We look for that first vegetative growth, the A, B, C's (Astilbe, Buttercups, Crocus) and sometimes D's (Daffodils) of the official announcement that 'Spring has sprung', even when the blossoms have to push their way through a blanket of snow. Often we can see the signs before we can hear them. This is the first time that I have lived near a body of water. Since living near the water, there has been a change in my announcement of the onset of spring. I now 'hear the sounds of spring' long before I see them. I hear the Canadian geese as they make their return migration to Canada. In fact, the route of the flight pattern goes right over my house. Then I hear the birds that have returned as well. This spring, I had the unique opportunity to hear a beautiful sound that will remain in my memorable experiences of springtime, the Agape Ringers, a hand bell choir. One of the members of our Board of Directors, Marian Gerharty was thoughtful enough to initiate a music concert to benefit the Genesee Orleans Ministry of Concern. She was also kind enough to share her talents and skills by participating as a member of The Agape Ringers under the direction of Pastor Susan Boring. The concert was very well attended, a testament to the well earned reputation of this extraordinary choir, as well as the Community Choir that sang under the direction of Lori Boseck. I was so impressed with the Agape Ringers that I was motivated to research this unique presentation. When my ignorance allowed me to refer to the concert as a performance, I was kindly corrected and informed that it was not a performance but an act of worship. In my research, I found that bells have been used in different cultures as a form of communication, and in religions as an aid to worship. As early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century, they were used to announce prayer times during the day. The first hand bells were made in England during the mid 1600's to better accommodate the mobility of "ringing bands" that had been formed. Hand bells were first brought to the United States by P.T. Barnum, after he was impressed by a group of English "ringers". As an entrepreneur, he saw the opportunity to introduce a new art form to America. All hand bell choirs were privately sponsored prior to 1940 when the first 'church hand bell choir' was formed in the First Presbyterian Church of New York City. So it seems fitting that our concert was held at the First Presbyterian Church in Albion. I am told that the title of the bell choir, Agape, means the highest form of God's love. This was evidenced by the peace and joy that was experienced by those in attendance. There were only smiles of happiness on the faces of the audience. We are grateful to the Albion Min-

isterium for sponsoring this fundraiser for our agency and grateful to the choir members who brought us joy. As Marcel Proust reminds us, "Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom." It is with these thoughts in mind and with this purpose that we serve those who come to us in need. We are grateful to those of you who help us to serve. Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul -Henry Ward Beech

Malika Hill  
Executive Director

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