

## REACH OUT

*Helping Hands, Caring Hearts*

SPRING 2011

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK:

**A**bout a year ago, my husband brought home a little sign for our garden. The sign is comprised of a series of metal letters that spells, "KINDNESS MATTERS."

Accepting the leadership of Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry (TBOM) has been eye opening. Understanding the breadth and depth of human need in Polk County is challenging!

To serve this community takes the help of so many. And, your help is critical as the need and numbers have grown — even over my four short months at TBOM. Your support is uplifting! The little sign in the garden

has taken on a new meaning...Kindness really does matter.

TBOM is simple kindness. The people we serve make no pretense about life. Their needs include food, shelter, heat in the winter, help with a medical bill or prescription. These are only a few of many basics they need help with. Working through the schools with food for the weekend or school supplies for children, TBOM is able to reach even more families.

Daily, people who never thought they would require assistance are crossing our threshold. This affects our volunteers, staff, and the very people we are serving. The worries are on the faces of people we know. We call out

even more vigorously to you, our neighbors, to reinforce the message, "kindness matters."

As you read this newsletter, know that we are our brother's keeper. You can make the difference between putting food on the table and paying the water bill.

Please help us through contributions and by helping to get the message out to churches, community organizations and businesses. Together, we will all prosper and know the difference kindness makes.

*Carol V. Newton,  
Executive Director*

## VALENTINE'S HIGH TEA HONORS ELOISE THWING

*"Her example encourages us to approach the work of compassion in a particular way, holding together two things that are often in tension with each other.*

*One is to focus on the daily work, the daily encounter with those in need, doing it the best we can, doing it in the right spirit, treating each person and each family with courtesy, fairness, and respect.*

*The other is to step back and try to get a look at the larger picture, challenging ourselves to admit our limitations and to go beyond them.*

*What are we missing? What is the real need, and how can we meet it? While never neglecting to offer simple charity, how can we rise to do justice for and with our neighbors in need?"*

*Tony Sayer, Former President,  
TBOM Board of Directors*



THE INCREDIBLE ELOISE THWING

## Personal Economics: *Facing Food Insecurity*

**F**ood insecurity refers to limited or uncertain access to food and to the disruption of a normal eating pattern.

Recently, TBOM noticed that some Polk County families are facing temporary or intermittent food insecurity.

In response, we launched a pilot program to assist families of school age children during such extenuating circumstances. We provide each family with an emergency food box to meet their immediate needs until other arrangements can be made.

If you or your organization is interested in learning more about or supporting this valuable program, please contact Lora Morgan at (828) 894-2988 x 127.



Eager students learn about TBOM's Food Pantry from Jim McClintock, our Pantry Manager.

### WOULD YOU, COULD YOU, DONATE WOOD?

TBOM recently finished its most successful winter firewood program ever. We distributed 66 loads of wood to our clients. Donated wood can mean the difference between paying a heating bill and having food on the table.

This is a great time of year to collect wood and get it ready for next winter.

If you would like to donate cut and split wood, please bring it to the TBOM building and follow the signs to the appropriate location to unload the wood.

If you have questions or want to donate wood that is not cut and split, please call Jim McClintock at (828) 894-2988 x 128.

## COME JOIN THE GARDEN OF HOPE!

**T**hermal Belt Outreach is taking applications for the second annual Garden of Hope Program. This program offers low income families the opportunity to obtain needed tools, seeds and fertilizer for a successful vegetable garden. It also gives families the opportunity to learn a new skill, build family ties and develop a network of community relationships.

The Garden of Hope project could use your help.

- ◆ Garden supplies can be funded by a \$40 contribution to TBOM,
- ◆ If you prefer to get your hands dirty and have experience

working with a variety of crops, please consider becoming a gardener's mentor.

If you are interested in being a part of this program, please call Michelle Reedy at (828) 894-2988 x 126 or come by the office.



Emily Skipper is excited to get her hands in the dirt and start her 2011 garden.

## A Volunteer's Perspective:

# *We're Surprised to See Our Neighbors Here*

I'm often asked by those not familiar with Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry, "Do you really think there's a need for that here in Polk County, of all places?" The simple answer to that question is an emphatic, "YES."

While I have been at TBOM for a short time (only two years), I have seen a huge increase in the number of individuals coming in for assistance. The influx of clients isn't from those one normally associates with needing assistance – those on a fixed income, for example. The new clients we see could be your neighbor, your child's best friend's parents, the individual who waits on you at your local restaurant or the person who sits next to you at church.... You just never know who will walk through the doors of TBOM.

The changes in the economy have caused many people within our community to ask for assistance. They are ashamed to come to us, they are often in tears and they're always hurting. Most of these clients have never asked for assistance before, have held good, well-paying jobs, have nice homes and good credit. Now they find themselves without work, barely able to keep the roof over their family's head and facing the choice of keeping their electricity on or buying food for the week.

That is why TBOM is here – to make the days of those in need a little easier, to give them someone to talk to and to help as much as we can until the day comes when we are no longer needed.

*Elena Kaut, TBOM Volunteer*

### HOW HAS THE ECONOMY AFFECTED OUR NEIGHBORS?

The economy has had a profound effect on our neighbors in Polk County.

- ✦ Over the last four years, the number of families we served during the month of January has **increased by 72%**.
- ✦ A weekly average of **10 families a day** received food and/or commodities from the TBOM Food Pantry during 2010. We fed **over 2600 clients** during the year.
- ✦ The Feed-A-Kid Backpack Program currently **serves 289 children a week**. Since the beginning of the current school year, we have distributed **nearly 8,000 food packages** to school children alone.

### HOW HAS THE ECONOMY AFFECTED TBOM?

SERVED ANNUALLY	2008	2009	2010	% ANNUAL INCREASE
Families	1499	1954	2194	37%
Individuals	3926	4881	5852	33%

Note: The numbers above do not reflect the children who receive food each week through our Feed-A-Kid Backpack Program or our annual Christmas Angel Tree Program.

#### **Please Give Generously:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_  Cash  
 Check

- Call me about ways to help.
- I'm interested in discussing forms of giving through insurance, will, etc.

*Thank You For Your Contribution!*

## Delivering the Goods Through Gifts-In-Kind

A unique new program funded by The Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Tryon allows TBOM to shop for donated consumer goods at the United Way's Gift-In-Kind Warehouse in Spartanburg, SC. We then distribute the merchandise, along with food and other valuable services, to Polk County residents in need.

*"We saved over \$800 on a recent trip to the Gift-In-Kind Warehouse in Spartanburg, SC. The products we acquired will be used to fill a very real void and can help sustain families."*

*Jim McClintock*  
TBOM Pantry Manager



SHOPPERS ON A MISSION

From left to right: Terry Bishop, pantry volunteer; Jim McClintock, TBOM Pantry Manager; Carol Greata, Good Shepherd Church; and Carol Newton, TBOM Executive Director. In front: Bob Breitweiser, Good Shepherd Church.

### PLEASE JOIN US:

- ◆ **TBOM Volunteer Training** will be held on April 4th and April 7th. Volunteers should register for training for one of these two days. We will cover important information about our mission and policies. Please call Michelle at (828) 894-2988 x 126 to register.
- ◆ TBOM volunteers, please join us for a **Luncheon** on May 27th. Let's celebrate a job well done!
- ◆ Save the Date! We will hold a **Car Show** at the Columbus BI-LO on May 28th....Details will be announced as the date approaches.

*Stay tuned for information on our Community Gardens!*



*Thank You For Your Kindness!*

*Even small contributions add up quickly.*

*Business owners – thanks for allowing us to place a donation can in your store.*

## Another Way to Help: Stores Offer Charitable Giving Opportunities

### BELK'S PRIVATE CHARITY SALE

April 16, 2011, 6am-10am.

Belk is supporting non-profit organizations with a Private Sale for its customers. By purchasing a \$5 ticket through TBOM, you will receive:

- ✦ admission to the Private Sale,
- ✦ 20-70% off Belk purchases storewide, including savings on rarely-discounted brands,
- ✦ \$5 off your first purchase (this makes your ticket free for all intents and purposes), and
- ✦ double points when you use your Belk charge card at any Belk store.

Proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to TBOM and will help to cover our operating expenses. Please contact the TBOM office at (828) 894-2988 to purchase a ticket to the Private Charity Sale.

### BI-LO AND FOOD LION SAVINGS CARDS

BI-LO and Food Lion offer special savings cards for shoppers who wish to have a portion of their sales donated to TBOM.

We encourage everyone to participate in this opportunity to support our mission.

Here's how to sign up:

**BI-LO:** Register for the BI-LO BONUSCARD at the customer service desk in the store. TBOM's organization code is: 00000750629.

**Food Lion:** Enroll in MVP Rewards on Food Lion's website: [www.foodlion.com](http://www.foodlion.com). Use TBOM's organization code: 252232.

*Please remember that your current savings cards will not help TBOM to participate in this valuable program!*

### WE NEED YOUR HELP: OUR WISHLIST



- ✦ We need a **Spanish Language Interpreter** to volunteer on a part-time basis.
- ✦ Do you have a spare **water pump** to donate to the community gardens?
- ✦ If you're an **able-bodied individual**, willing to work hard for a good cause, we'd love to have your help clearing land on April 11, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- ✦ If you have time to cut and split wood, we would be grateful for your assistance and efforts.

Contact our office at (828) 894-2988 if you're interested in volunteering or donating.

*"TBOM is an unwavering core resource in a community with real needs. The staff and volunteers are sensitive and supportive and the clients are treated with respect and dignity on every level. My interactions with staff were uplifting. I am amazed at how many people they help during the week and on holidays with wood, food, afghans and gift cards. TBOM deserves all the support this community can give back so they can continue helping their clients."*

*With immense gratitude,  
An Anonymous Client.*

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*"We would like to thank the  
Polk County community for  
20 years of supporting our  
mission with caring hearts  
and helping hands"*

Carol Newton  
Executive Director, TBOM

## TBOM 2011 DIRECTORS & STAFF

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Ann Carswell  
*Assistant Director*  
Jim McClintock  
*Pantry & Technology*  
Lora Morgan  
*Feed A Kid/ Volunteers*  
Ray Norden  
*Finance*  
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