



We CAN make a difference...



GRACE Ministries of the United Methodist Church in Northern Virginia is a community outreach program serving low income families. Your support helps us gather resources to address the varied needs of families from many nations.

Distribution Day

Centreville provides 100 families with food and clothing

By Patricia Nicastrì

Approximately 100 families gathered at Centreville United Methodist Church on July 9. They listened to songs, gave thanks and shared a time for fellowship while their young children colored, looked at picture books and made playdoh sculptures. Men and women waited for their numbers to be called so they could receive food, clothing, diapers, linens, toys and books.

Most of the work happens the Friday before the distribution. There were 59 volunteers working on Friday to set up for the big event. Duties ranged from separating and folding clothes to putting the food bags together. Diapers needed to be separated into bags, the children's area needed to be set up and various clothing rooms needed to be sorted by gender and age. Even children helped set up by taking clothes to their correct rooms and helping to sort diapers.

Robin Fazier, a volunteer in the women's clothing area who has been volunteering since the Centreville GRACE Ministries site first opened, said, "You can make new friends and get to know people from all over the world." She volunteers every Saturday of the distribution and as many Fridays as she can, bringing her family along so they can learn how blessed they are.

"I just like to volunteer...it's a way to serve the community and it doesn't take much time," Robin said.

Several of the volunteers are also clients. Three years ago, Alas Hana was a Christian living with her family in Iraq. To escape religious persecution, she and her family moved to Jordan and from there to Virginia. They recently moved to Vienna, VA, but

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Upcoming Events

September 8- PCA Class starts at Floris UMC

October 1- Bishop's Convocation on Immigration Issues at Grace UMC, Manassas

October 29- GRACE Ministries Dinner at Mount Olivet UMC, Arlington

August Distributions

August 6- Culmore, Floris

August 13- Centreville

August 20- Arlington, Mount Olivet, Crossroads

August 27- St. Stephens

CNA Job Fair

In June, CNA students were able to meet with 10 agencies

still make the drive to Centreville each month to volunteer. Domingo, a Guatemalan day laborer, walks about a mile each Friday of the distribution to donate his time and effort.

Barb Shaiko, who runs the distribution at Centreville each month, expected there would be fewer families at the distribution than usual.

“There are a few less [families] because of summer and Floris is having their distribution at the same time so we expect the numbers to be reduced,” Barb said.



Families share a time of fellowship before receiving food bags

Where Are They Now?

Cecilia Estrada, PCA and CNA graduate shares her story

By Patricia Nicastrì



From left to right, Dr. Heisung Lee, Supervisor Catherine Hudgins, Cecilia Estrada, Caryl Welsh MSN RN, Rosanne Sheehan

while they handed out their resumes. One student was offered a job on the spot!



Cecilia Estrada graduated from the CNA program at Floris in the spring of 2010 and now works as a CNA at Caton Merchant House, an Assisted Living Facility in Prince William County. The journey has been a long one though, beginning in 1999 when Cecilia came to the United States from Santa Ana, El Salvador in search of a better life for her and her children.

After living in New York for a while, Cecilia relocated to Virginia and later learned about the GRACE Ministries food and clothing distribution at Floris United Methodist Church in 2004. She began attending each month.

Cecilia heard about the PCA program from a church member and applied to take the 2007 PCA class. Three years later she took the first CNA course offered through GRACE Ministries and graduated in the spring 2010 class.

"I really enjoy work as a CNA because I love helping people," Cecilia said.

She looks forward to more training to become a medication aide, who is not only responsible for caring for each patient but can also give them medicine.

Cecilia is happy to have full time work to support her family. She has three daughters, Melena, Gisela and Leslie, ranging from ages 8 to 11.

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