

# The LADDER COMMUNITY CENTER EVENTS

## Fun Running in the Rain

By Jodi Byers

The Ladder's second annual Fall Festival 5k and Fun Run were filled with cheering, laughter, competitive spirits, and rain. The goal of these events was to connect families and multi-generations in a fun and encouraging environment. At this year's event, there were 48 participants and 21 volunteers that brought enthusiasm and joy, even with an unexpected downpour.

During the races, we witnessed inspiring moments that deserve true celebration. Eilene, our oldest participant at 81, not only showed up to walk in the rain, but she also convinced her daughter (at the last minute) to join the race with her. We had entire families participate with lots of toddlers and even newborns. We had three teams that included three generations! Despite the rain, we had many come and cheer on the runners. Jonathan, our first place male winner, was cheered on by his dad and brother from the sidelines. These were beautiful pictures of unity and celebration! Despite the unpredictable weather, God sightings were clear, and we were grateful to bring people together—the young and the young-at-heart—to shine the light of Jesus in the Shelby community.

A congratulatory shout-out to our winners: First place male: Jonathan Carballido; first place female: Brandy Dashiell; youngest participant: Jayden Anderson; oldest participant: Ilene Schmieding; most generations (three-way tie with three generations each): "Three Princesses" (Rachel and Ashlyn James, Jan Sexson), "Melchor Family" (Irma, Casey, and Airiel Melchor), and "The Turtles" (Michelle and Todd Deuling, Fawn Lenon, Dare Jousma, and Ilene Schmieding).



Team "Three Princesses" had three generations of runners (L-R: Rachel, Ashlyn, and Jan).



Smiles from two of our 21 awesome volunteers, Rick and Cathy Zoulek.



So proud of Alex and Jonathan, our Shelby Cross Country Runners who got up early to join us!

*Countdown to*

# CHRISTMAS

Nov. 27-Dec. 23

Sign-up required  
for some events.

For a detailed list of events,  
visit The Ladder or go to:

ADULTS



SCAN ME

YOUTH



SCAN ME

\*Some events are  
Intergenerational!

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## Fawn Lenon

By Vicki Davey

**Revelation 21:5b**  
*"Behold, I make all things new."*

This is the transforming power of Christ, and this renewal is at the heart of the story of Fawn Lenon. To hear her talk about her life, one quickly realizes that life truly began again three years ago when she chose to acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord of her life. She freely shares about the lightness of heart she felt as she came up from the waters of baptism and left the troubles and bad choices of the past behind. What is her response to this tremendous gift of love and forgiving grace? Why, it's giving to others, of course!

This heart to give back brought Fawn to The Ladder to serve God through community outreach. Initially, she filled in at the front desk, greeting guests and sharing a smile. She still fulfills this role on Tuesdays, but on Mondays and Wednesdays she indulges her love for cleaning by meeting the needs of The Ladder in this manner. The floors have never looked better. She will even come in on certain Saturdays to tidy up before people gather for worship.

Fawn's time at The Ladder isn't all about work, however. She joyfully joins in during the Monday and Thursday prayer meetings led by Donna Near, when the needs of the cancer patients are put before the Lord. And for the first time this fall, she participated in The Ladder's Fall Festival Fun Run.

Born in Hart, Fawn and her sister knew a troubled childhood, punctuated by fractured relationships and damaged trust. Frequent moves made it hard to feel connected to others and experience a sense of community. Too soon, adult responsibilities weighed down her youthful shoulders, pushing her to escape by running into an early marriage. What followed was a series of choices that numbed the hurt, but didn't fill the soul. She needed a U-turn. God answered her prayers in 2016 through a relationship with Jo Belknap at the Shelby Assembly of God church, and through meeting Rick Lenon, whom she wed on Valentine's Day in 2017. Thus began her journey of renewal.

Fawn and Rick live on Sixth Street in Shelby. They have three adult sons between them and extended family nearby. She enjoys cooking and baking and tends to an ever-enlarging garden during the summer. Her goal is to learn how to can her own produce as her grandmother once did. She has a real heart for the senior community and once worked in Hart as a certified nurse's aide, just as her mother had done. These days she enjoys serving the seniors through her work at The Ladder and by cleaning for select individuals. Fawn's story is one of inspiration and hope. We can all use more of that.



**Fawn (left) loves spending time at The Ladder with young-at-heart member Ilene (right).**

# CELEBRATING LIFE

**Mary Bromley** Sept. 19, 1951—Sept. 24, 2023

By Michelle Deuling

Saying goodbye is seldom an easy thing to do, and this past September was no exception. Mary Bromley, one of seven children, had just turned 72 years old when she was taken from us. Losing the battle with cancer on September 24, Mary left behind her husband Bevis, whom she married in 1972 and her two children, Heather and Ami. She also had five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Many at The Ladder have prayed for Mary over the last few years as she fought her battle. We will miss seeing her on Thursdays as she gathered with friends in The Ladder café to play Bingo.



**Esther VanNett** July 19, 1922—Sept. 22, 2023

By Brian Beckman

My favorite memory of Esther at The Ladder is the day she was dancing with her walker to a polka being played by the Friday Jammers. She was 100 years old. Esther was a woman who loved life and extended her love to everyone. Pastor Rick Essenberg said, "Esther didn't mind about most things, but Esther would mind if you had a hug and didn't give it." It was one way she extended her love.

This love extended to her friends at The Ladder. On Thursday nights before Covid, The Ladder was the gathering place for family night. Many Ladder youth and adults joined in the fun, with volunteer Brenda Babinec leading a group of wonderful ladies to provide food and games for those in attendance. Esther would attend, along with her daughter Connie and son-in-law Bill. Esther wasn't as much into the games as she was the food; she especially loved dill pickles and pizza. She befriended two young men, Tony and Nick. She spoke life into Nick, so much so that when she was very ill in Shelby Hospital, Nick wanted to visit her. Nick couldn't get out of the hospital room without her hugging him, even though she was in bed. It was a great picture of our older people and youth loving each other.



Esther recently shared with me some of the things that she endured through her life. She credited Jesus for keeping her going through those hardships. "I am so thankful for Jesus," she said. "I can still talk with Jesus. I do so everyday on behalf of The Ladder."

I was overcome with emotion for this compassionate lady who loved Jesus and her community with all her heart. Even in her last days, she felt compelled to pray for others. She continued, "I love The Ladder, every part of it: the people, the activities and the loving staff. God is using The Ladder to change Shelby." Esther had prayed for The Ladder faithfully and had given a monthly donation since it opened back in February of 2016. We are forever grateful for her perseverance, faithfulness, and love. She has been a wonderful ambassador and champion for The Ladder cause.

Back in late August, my wife Sue and I visited her at her daughter Connie's home. Connie and Bill faithfully cared for her for the past 11 years. Hospice said that she didn't have many days left. Upon leaving, I told Sue, "Wow, that woman has so much life left." Esther assured me during that visit, "I am still praying for The Ladder. It is something I can still do." Our beloved Esther passed away on September 22. I know that she is dancing with Jesus, free of any physical challenges. What a privilege to have known her and shared life with her. Her love was contagious; her light shined for Jesus.