

EVENTS

Teaming Up with Country Dairy

By Holly Baxter

The Ladder joined Country Dairy on July 6 for its annual Ice Cream Social at the Country Dairy Farm Store in New Era. Country Dairy donated the \$3,200 in earnings from the event to The Ladder and three other local non-profits, which totaled \$800 for each non-profit.

All 16 Ladder staff and volunteers showed up and cheerfully served wherever they were needed, happy to serve God by serving their community. We cooked burgers, served ice cream, helped park cars, and greeted guests. We also had an information tent, where we offered brochures, Ladder merchandise giveaways, and balloon animals for kids. Ladder staff even manned the photo booth next to our tent, taking pictures of families having fun. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve and become acquainted with many people in our community and to educate people on what we have to offer. The Ladder is thankful to Country Dairy and all those who attended the Ice Cream Social and donated to help the non-profits in our community.



Ladder volunteers Marty and Steve made lots of balloon animals for kids at the Ice Cream Social.

Safety Training

By Cathy Zoulek

It is very important to us that The Ladder be a safe place for everyone. Training our staff and volunteers is one way that we can make sure that everyone knows what to do if there is ever a dangerous situation that occurs at The Ladder. We held our annual safety training sessions on Monday August 19 and Wednesday August 21. The staff and volunteers were trained on how to handle an active shooter situation using the "Run, Hide, Defend" tactics. They also completed Abuse Management training. This training included understanding how offenders operate, warning signs of abuse, and how to take action when it happens. We never know when or if we will ever come face-to-face with a dangerous situation, but we feel confident that training our staff and volunteers will give them the knowledge they need to keep themselves and everyone else that comes to The Ladder safe.

Honoring Retirees

By Brian Beckman

The Ladder is all about community and seeks to honor God and the people of our community. The Retirement Open House began three years ago as an opportunity to honor those people who have given years of their lives serving the people of Shelby and Oceana County. We are grateful that it is a collaborative event sponsored by The Ladder, Shelby Rotary Club, Shelby Public Schools, and Shelby Chamber of Commerce.

Approximately 150 people attended the 2024 Retirement Open House at The Ladder on Friday, July 12. One of our community members stated, "This event is so important to our community. I love it and hope you continue to provide this celebration. It shows great honor to those people who have embraced our community. Way to go!"

A special thank you to Cathy Schouten for greeting the guests and to the Boardwell family for providing and serving refreshments and appetizers. The retirees who attended were very appreciative of being honored and they thank the community for this event.

The following people were honored at this year's event. We appreciate their service to our community and wish them well in their future endeavors.

PETE ROSKAM	43 YEARS	GALES AGENCY
SANDY GRIFFIN	38 YEARS	OCEANA CITY ROAD COMMISSION
BOB BECKMAN	60 YEARS	BECKMAN BROTHERS
MARILYN GLOVER	40 YEARS	SHELBY TOWNSHIP
RHONDA ZAVERL GOLDEN	42.5 YEARS	OCEANA CITY MEDICAL FACILITY
CAROL WALLER	45 YEARS	SHELBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCOTT POORT	28 YEARS	SHELBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SHARON SPONHAUER	16 YEARS	SHELBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
LISA PRANGER	13 YEARS	HELENA AGRI-ENTERPRISES
DAN ROBERTS	26 YEARS	SHELBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



L-R: Back row - Pete, Sandy, Rhonda, Dan, Bob. Front Row - Sharon, Carol, Marilyn, Lisa. (Not pictured: Scott)

Grillin' for God Serves 500

By Michelle Deuling

Grillin' for God was a great way to spend our Fridays at The Ladder in August. It gave The Ladder an opportunity to reach out with thanks to our community by gifting those who stopped by with a grilled hotdog, chips, water, and a brownie.

Mac's Meats in Rothbury provided 500 hotdogs that we served throughout the month, and another donor supplied 50 quarter-pound hotdogs that we served on the last Friday of August. Mac's Meats also supplied all the water! THANK YOU, Mac's Meats and Cynthia Hernandez!

Grilling this year were a few newbie grillers. Ladder mentors Todd Deuling, Mike Shockey, and Michael Cook worked alongside Ladder youth Connor DeWitt, Malachi Den Engelse, and Brenden Lopez respectively. The father/son duo Ricky and Rusty Thomas returned to the grill for the third consecutive year, and Shelby Public Schools Resource Officer Tim Simon served alongside Collin Munoz-Allen to finish off the five weeks of fun this year. Noreen Campagna did a wonderful job as the Grillin' for God overseer. Not only did she prep before the teams came in, but she helped package and serve to our community. Romee Fox also helped by passing out the bags to customers and assisting Noreen. We truly appreciate Noreen, Romee and all of our grillers!



L-R: Ladder volunteers Noreen, Todd, Connor, and Romee served hot dogs, chips, brownies, and water to the community.

We also want to thank all of you who drove and walked through or decided to join us for a meal inside. It was such a blessing to have a full house, as several families filled our café. You all made August a special month, and we thank God for each of you!

CELEBRATING LIFE

Aimee Jo Walsworth

October 17, 1975—July 10, 2024



By Mechele Martinez Gonzales

Aimee recently went home to be with Christ Jesus after almost a year-long battle with cancer. She and her husband Ron were married for 26 years. Aimee was a dedicated stay-at-home mom to three children, whom she homeschooled. She was a step-mom to two grown daughters (and their husbands) and a loving grandma to their children.

Aimee's three children have been youth members at The Ladder for two years. When Aimee began attending our monthly Parent Time Gatherings, Coach Love and I were in awe of the love Aimee had for Jesus and for her family. She fully understood her responsibilities as a Christian, as a wife, and as a mom. Not long afterward, Aimee became a volunteer at The Ladder. She also assisted with Ladies of Honor, where we work with a group of middle school girls for one hour a week to teach them what it looks like to live a Christian life as a young lady.

Soon after she joined us in Ladies of Honor, Aimee was diagnosed with Leukemia. Her and her family's lives quickly changed. I felt honored when Aimee asked me if

I would help out with getting her to doctor appointments. What a blessing it was for me to be there to love on her, to pray for (and with) her, and to talk about our Lord with her. Aimee made sure to always be kind and full of the Lord's love, regardless if she was at a doctor appointment or in the midst of a long hospital stay. Not even in her last days did I witness Aimee change and become someone other than who God called her to be. In May, Aimee shared with me how she and her husband had agreed, "If God heals me, He gets the glory; if He doesn't heal me, He still gets the glory."

Her favorite scripture from the Bible was Psalm 23. The inspiration that flows from this passage is indeed calming, and it acknowledges that God is personal to those who believe and receive His abundant blessings. I praise God for the wonderful influence Aimee had on me and so many others. Without question, I know Aimee kept His word stored in her heart.

Aimee has received that welcome from our Lord that we all long to hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant;

enter into the joy of your Lord." There is a profound sense of joy in that Aimee has finished her race and is in the presence of the Lord whom she served faithfully. At the same time, there is a real sense of loss and sadness Aimee's family and friends are experiencing. The saying "Our loss is heaven's gain" is true, but the many who knew her and loved her are encouraged to emulate the example of her life. She steadfastly demonstrated what it meant to simply "trust and obey." Because she viewed God as being altogether sovereign, faithful, wise, and good, even when she could not fathom His plan or His purposes, she knew He could be trusted. I will never forget this statement Aimee once texted me: "God doesn't exist to meet our needs. Ultimately, He is God; He is worthy of our obedience, our worship, and our surrender to Him as Lord." She has left a rich legacy through her family and friends. All glory and praise to God.

Carol Wright

January 1, 1931—July 24, 2024



By Michelle Deuling

Carol was quick-witted, loyal, and a dear friend. She lived a full life, enjoying our community and God's creation as much as possible. Her story of how she came to be a member of the Shelby community is as fascinating as the lady telling the story. She once told me that she saw God's hand at work in her life from a young age. She moved here as a teenager to take care of her sister, who had tuberculosis. She met her husband of 66 years, Bob, at church. After they married, Bob served in the military and was stationed in Texas. While in Texas, she contract-

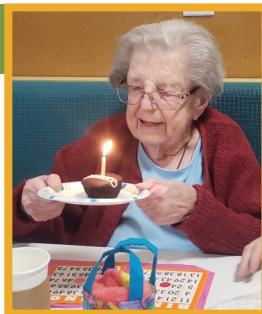
ed polio and had to return to Michigan to recuperate. Carol passed on her generous heart, musical talent, and quick wit to three children: Marjean, Rosalyn and Brian.

Carol and Bob were very community-minded. Bob served on the Shelby School Board for many years, and Carol played the organ for countless local funerals. For many years, the two of them dressed in vintage clothing and drove their 1931 Model A in the annual Shelby Homecoming Parade.

We at The Ladder thank God for the generosity of this family as they continue to support our community by naming The Ladder as Carol's memorial. We are grateful for their family's love for Shelby.

Josephine Campagna

March 18, 1919—August 16, 2024



By Brian Beckman

Many people who come to bingo at The Ladder enjoyed watching Aunt Jo play, especially when bingo was called. Aunt Jo would give a facial expression that was worth a thousand words. If she won, she would smile. If she lost, she looked disgusted. She also had competitive spirit in playing cards and other games. It was just who she was. Here at The Ladder, we called her Aunt Jo because three of her nieces who volunteer here—Noreen Campagna, Ann Campagna, and Carmine Osborne—would call her that.

Aunt Jo started coming to The Ladder soon after it opened in February 2016. She was a regular. At 96, she drove herself here on Mondays to play dominoes and on Thursdays to play bingo. Jo was very pleasant and friendly to everyone. It was always a highlight to see her enjoying her time at The Ladder. We celebrated nine birthdays with her, and each time she'd say, "I don't know why I am still here," which always made us laugh.

Early in her life, she worked in Chicago making O'Henry

candy bars. Maybe that is why she liked her sweets. On bingo day, Ladder volunteer Shirley Herin and Jo's niece Noreen regularly bring sweet treats for everyone, which Aunt Jo really enjoyed. Many times I would offer her and others a healthier choice as a joke, but Aunt Jo didn't think it was funny. Noreen told me when Aunt Jo won, if the prize was not candy, her response was always, "What do I want that for?" As you can imagine at 105, we would probably say the same. Aunt Jo won her fair share of bingo games. "It was just unbelievable how sharp she was at her age," said Ladder volunteer Rich Eitnrear, who calls bingo every Thursday.

Aunt Jo had strong family values. Her nieces would dote on her when she was here playing. She always got special treatment from them—and from everyone else here, too. Why not? She was 105 years old! The last few years she had a caregiver accompany her, but she still walked in with a cane in one hand and a niece on her other side, with arms linked.

Her daughters Chris Lound and Judy Lankfer and their families were so faithful to her. It was a beautiful picture at her visitation of family far-reaching gathering together to pay their respect to this beautiful lady. I was struck with Chris and Judy's hospitality to all who came. They not only said thank you, but they greeted all by name in such a warm and friendly way. They made people feel like they belonged.

The Ladder would like to thank Aunt Jo's family for their support of The Ladder during the last nine years and for naming The Ladder as Aunt Jo's memorial. We are honored to have spent this time with her. It was a true privilege.

Margaret Huston

February 3, 1935—August 26, 2024



By Michelle Deuling

Margaret Huston showed God's love throughout her life here in Shelby as she spoke of her work in the hospital, attended church, visited with friends, or bought her groceries. She loved the Ladder and enjoyed the option of walking indoors during inclement weather.

"We are very grateful to John and Margaret for their kindness to The Ladder. They were enthusiastic supporters of Shelby!" said The Ladder's Director, Brian Beckman. "I remember when we had clean-up days here in town. John and Margaret parked their car at the Congregational Church and made the walk down to the Wesleyan Church, one of the first to drop off desserts for

the workers."

Margaret had many good friends, and she was always willing to share a chat. When Carol Wright moved to Muskegon, Margaret and a few of their friends made the trek to visit Carol, letting her know she wasn't forgotten.

John and Margaret were faithful members at the Wesleyan Church, and it was a real treat to watch her be baptized on December 22, 2019 at 84 years old. I am blessed to have known her and to have had the opportunity to see her love for God, family, and friends. Margaret was a faithful donor to The Ladder, where she

continues to be a blessing through the legacy she has left behind in her children, grandchildren and those she influenced over the years. We would like to thank her children, Michael (Pam) Huston, Mark (Barbara) Huston, and Lisa (Scott) Kidder for naming The Ladder as her memorial.

Memorial contributions for Carol, Jo, and Margaret may be made to: The Ladder Community Center, 67 N. State St., Shelby, MI 49455. You may also donate online: www.theladdercommunitycenter.com/give