



Pictured from left, front row: Patricia Nichols, Gretchen Wilson, Jean Riccardo, Christina Sterling and Fatima Kendrick; second row: Priscilla Storm, RN, Elena Andreev, Melissa DiFillippo, Lisa Tracy, Shakima Atkinson, Anna Herringshaw, Wendy Martin, and Rosanne Hebert; back row: Tracey Campagna, Billy Demby, Dixie Ingerham, Natasha Page, Anita Uszkiewicz, Fred Scerbo, Charlene Newman and Lucy Von Dauber.

CNA graduates honored

With Christmas songs being played on the piano, there were many smiles and some tears of happiness shed as the class of Certified Nursing Assistants graduated from the program sponsored by Mohawk Valley Nursing Home in Ilion and Folts Homes in Herkimer.

Since the inception of this course, 174 students have successfully completed the classes and exams to become CNAs.

A graduation ceremony was held in the chapel at Folts Homes, with Priscilla L. Storm, RN, BA, CNA instructor/trainer, as facilitator for the program. The invocation and benediction were offered by Folts Homes chaplain the Rev. Roger K. Klossner.

Welcoming and congratulatory remarks to the students and their families were made by Fred Scerbo, administrator of Folts Homes.

Storm introduced Folts Homes staff members: Rosanne Hebert, director of Nursing, and Matt Powers, directors of Education; and MVNH staff members: Wendy Martin, director of Nursing,

Tracey Campagna, director of Education, Lucy VonDauber, assistant instructor; and a special acknowledgement to Tracy Dudin, LPN, as assistant clinical instructor.

Rev. Klossner delivered a message to the students about the importance of applying their talents and skills to better the lives of the residents they will serve and to never forget the importance of “touch” when interacting with people. Rev. Klossner quoted, “The only limits you have are in your mind. Your attitude will determine your altitude.”

A special surprise for the graduates was a DVD created by Lucy VonDauber of candid pictures taken of the CNA students depicting their classroom and clinical experiences, with the song “Do I Make You Proud” by Taylor Hicks.

The class takes approximately four weeks with two weeks of classes and two weeks of clinical experience. For information on the CNA course, contact MVNH in Ilion at 895-4050, ext. 5411.

New members received at Bethany UMC

March 30th was a busy Sunday at Bethany UMC when folks were received into membership either by profession of faith or by transfer and one baptism! It was truly a day of celebration!

New members include Glenna Ben-

nett, Carol LaValley, John McKnight, Wendy McMahan, Shannon Casler, Heidi Sankey and Frederica Webb,

Lay supply at Bethany UMC is Frederica Webb and Rev. Bruce Chapman is past pastor.

The connection at work

by Pastors Norma Jean and Arthur Fellows

After three months of planning, seven persons from the Mohawk District – four from the Living Waters Parish and three from South Otselic UMC – left January 11 for a Volunteers In Mission trip to Mississippi.

The destination was Camp St. Paul at the St. Paul UMC in Ocean City, Miss. This VIM mission trip was planned by the Culpeper Virginia UMC, their fourth. In route we met up with five members of the Culpeper group and stayed overnight in Bristol, Va. Upon reaching Gulfport, the New York group filled the Culpeper vehicles and the eight passenger vehicle from New York went to the airport to pick up seven of the Culpeper group who traveled by air from Virginia. When we reached Camp St. Paul we had driven 1,428 miles from Madison.

We were greeted by Jack and Dee Boering, directors of the camp; the dorms and other facilities were very adequate, housing about 60 persons. Sunday the group of 21 worshiped at Mount Pleasant UMC at Turkey Creek. On their previous trips the Culpeper group stayed at and worked through this facility. There were VIM teams from NCNY Conference, New England, Greater New York, Virginia, and Illinois Conferences all worshipping at the Mt. Pleasant UMC. After worship we visited one of the families whose home was rebuilt by the Culpeper team. Sunday afternoon we toured the Gulfport area, visiting the Katrina Memorial at Biloxi and seeing the devastation that exists more than two years after the storms.

Monday through Friday mornings we fixed bag lunches and ate breakfast at 6:30 with devotions at 7 a.m. Our team of 23 was divided into three groups. Immediately following devotions we gathered the tools and supplies we needed and went to our sites. Sometimes it was necessary to stop for supplies on the way to our sites or send someone for supplies as the day progressed. Our teams worked until 4:30 or 5 p.m. each day, returning in time to shower before 6 p.m. supper. Each evening our team had devotions led by laity (there were three pastors on team) and an opportunity to share in witnessing to each other.

During our five day stay our team finished siding and completed the trim work on a house, put doors on closets and finished the molding and interior trim work in another. A house was gutted – everything taken out to the studs. Another house was ready for taping and mudding the sheet rock; by the end of the week this house was ready for painting. The other house we worked in was partially gutted, insulated, and the sheet rock hung, taped, and mudded in all the rooms except the kitchen by the end of the week.

Each night we ate supper at St. Paul's

UMC; Tuesday evening a case worker explained how they found houses and evaluated each family according to the priority of their needs. She also explained that many denominations were giving money and that now it is primarily the Methodists and Mennonites, with some help from the Baptists who are doing the work of rebuilding. Presently 46 percent of the homes that were damaged during hurricanes Katrina and Rita are rebuilt. Recently the Mississippi Conference made another two year commitment to continuing the rebuilding effort in Mississippi. The caseworker also explained how grateful the people in the area are for the groups who have and continue to come to do the rebuilding. The local people refer to the teams of workers as “clumpers” because they travel in “clumps;” the locals recognize rebuilding teams and often come up to persons thanking them for coming to help rebuild their homes and communities. On Wednesday night the St. Paul's Church community joined us for supper (about 100) and afterward we joined them for worship.

Friday evening when we went out to supper our waitress shared with us that the roof on her home was put on it by a team like ours. We returned to the St. Paul Church after dinner for team worship and a closing time together which included feasting as community at the Lord's Table. Saturday in the rain we packed up and returned to the airport or started the trip back north, arriving Sunday night in Madison Jan.20, 1412 miles later.

Some reflections: It was good to see how the Mississippi Conference has responded and continues to respond to needs of the people. It was heartwarming when people in churches, restaurants and Lowe's, came up to us and thanked us for caring and coming to help them rebuild their homes, communities and lives. The way that the “northerners” [Yankees from NY] and the “southerners” [folks from Culpeper, south of the Mason-Dixon Line] bonded and became a team was a gift to all; for the authors of this article to be able to work with their daughter, son, and grandson, who are members of the Culpeper UMC and to make a connection across conference and jurisdictional lines was a special gift from God! It was also good to see the presence of the Oneida St. Paul disaster trailer in Mississippi at Camp St. Paul's.

As we reflect on Matthew 4:18, Jesus calling the first disciples, we now have a new understanding of what it means to leave it all and follow. We recommend that you try giving yourself away; your life will be changed.