

Friends of Vera Lloyd SPECIAL NEEDS EDITION: **BEDS, BIBLES and TLC!**

Hello to our dear church family and friends!

This special spring edition of Friends of Vera Lloyd is a little different than most. This edition recaps Pink Hat Day but is focused on some new and urgent needs this spring and early summer. New growth, new programs and new ministry focus is always exciting and always challenging. I just wanted all of our family and friends to be “in the know”.

And, as ALWAYS, I appreciate each and every one of you and the caring support you give our youth. There are not really words to express how your prayers and generous support continue to make the difference in the life of each child!

In Him, Katy Bates
Church Relations Coordinator
Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Home and Family Services

10th Annual PINK HAT DAY at Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Home

“Hold on to your hats” was true in every sense of the phrase this year! April 9th, our campus in Monticello, AR, was an explosion of pink as we enjoyed this day set aside to honor and appreciate our Presbyterian Women and many Friends of Vera Lloyd. Watching the happy crowd touring the pink “bedazzled” campus, engaging with the youth all decked out in their “pink” best, warmed each and every heart. The kids were up late and up early to get things ready and they have never been more excited to share their homes and their hearts with you all. Sometimes God’s love just surprises us with



its joy and fun.

Graceminster PC Presbyterian Ladies, Monroe, LA

What a sight to see five golf carts, decorated with flowing pink ribbons and driven by some of our campus staff in hot pink visors, “buzzing” the ladies around to see all the sights. Pink balloon arch ways, pink walls and curtains, homemade pink lemonade and pink cupcakes were just a fraction of what the kids created as they participated in the “BEST PINKED UP HOUSE” contest and eagerly hosted each guest. It was a very close call, but the Timble boys took the prize. But each one of the homes deserves so much credit for all their work and creativity. You would have had to see it to believe it!



Pettus Home Hallway all Pinked UP!

Laughter and delight was in the air as our very special **pink** golf cart shuttled our visitors to the home of our Campus Administrator, Ray Carson, where they were hosted by his family to a to a pink chocolate fountain and luscious strawberries. Thank you so much to the whole Carson family. Ray, his gracious wife Leigh, and their children, Josh and Crystal, all truly got into the spirit of Pink Hat Day! Ray was crowned “King” of Pink Hat Day and for good reason!

At noon, it was time to find our seats, enjoy the sumptuous “Afternoon Tea” buffet and experience the program. We judged the marvelous pink hats, handed out door prizes, honored special guests and recognized those who had traveled far or were brand new.



PINK HAT WINNER



Enjoying the buffet



Best Pink Hat Contest

This year the “Traveling Pink Hat Award” went to the precious ladies at Graceminister Presbyterian Church in Monroe, LA, for the many “traveling miles” they put in this year with their girls at Pettus. It was accepted by Betty Millwee, Ethel Criner and the “Hummer Ladies” gang. Though the whole

attendance is involved in the vote, it was almost too close to call! Because ALL of our treasured Presbyterian Women groups are most deserving!

The group that came to campus this year was fantastic in so many special ways. We enjoyed the company of 89 "Pink Hatters" and many of our PW groups came "bigger" than ever and brought with them so many new faces to enjoy this day for the first time. We also were thrilled to see more than a few brave men in pink ball caps in the crowd. What a treasure.

The kids, of course, "stole the show". Five of our youth, who were graduating seniors this year, or had received their GED, were honored personally by Mr. Ray for their achievement. The fashion show was very enlightening, as seven of our boys and girls gave us all a glimpse into what is "hot" in teen wear on campus. They were so poised and chic, going down the "runway" in their casual wear, athletic wear and church attire. They know it is hard for us all to keep up!



Conversation" Presentation

" Signboard

But, nothing was more tender and precious than the "sign board conversation" that ended the program. Here the youth let us look into their hearts and minds in a very intimate way. Each youth has a cardboard sign on which they carefully consider and write down a word that describes the emotion they were feeling the day they came to Vera Lloyd and on the other side a word that best describes how they feel today. What a rare privilege to witness firsthand how Christ's healing love intimately shapes the path of each child HE entrusts with us. As each youth, walked across the stage and presented their sign, we watched their emotion descriptions change from words such as "Scared" to "Safe", or from "Angry" to "Loved" . As they lined up across the gymnasium, holding their signs high, they "spelled out" the reason for it all. His love changes us. Tears came; tears of joy and tears of gratefulness for HIS powerful love that embraces and heals us all, young and old alike.

Looking forward.....

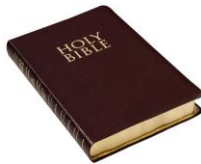


BEDS:

As you know, each home has 8 twin beds for the kids. These beds are so used so much, they wear out and have to be replaced over and over. Well, rather than buy new twin beds frequently, which is costly, we have come up with a NEW plan. We want to permanently install built-in beds in each bedroom. These built-in beds will be long lasting, sturdy and have the great added benefit of big storage drawers under the bed itself. Then, we just have to replace the mattresses, as needed. We feel this will help solve the worn-out bed problem, fill a storage need and give more space in the small bedrooms. GENUIS HUH?!!!!

Well, we are going to start in the Lewis home and the wonderful and talented men's group from Second Presbyterian Church in Little Rock, the "Over the Hill Gang", have donated their time and talent to design and build the first ones. Here is the need: \$ money to buy the lumber and supplies needed to build eight strong and sturdy twin beds that will be attached to the wall and have two large clothes drawers beneath the bed itself. We estimate the beds to cost about \$50-\$75 per bed. So, for approximately \$500 per home, we can sleep the kids soundly for years and years to come.

Not having to replace beds over and over will be a big savings in the long run and look better right away. Thanks so much to this great group of guys led by Joe McKinstry, this is an idea whose time has come! , with their willing hands and labor, this great idea is going to take shape. Please help us with this project.



BIBLES:

Since we service close to 150 to 175 kids per year and there is one thing that we always need on hand and that is bibles. At their initial intake, the youth are given clothes and other basic needs and their own bible. We buy special teen bibles in bulk. They are NKJ Bibles written in a teen format and on a junior high reading level. These bibles have commentary for youth, study helps and is written in a very user friendly way. It's very important that the kids have a personal bible they can read and understand. It is theirs to keep forever. We do not use the regular standard church or pew bibles, so we can tailor this vital need to where they are in reading and in their faith journey.

We only have a few left on hand and the fall is our busiest intake season. Please help us with the bible ordering fund. We need to have about 75 on hand at any time. At a cost of about \$12 each, we will buy as many as we can with the funds allocated to that need.

We know that they may not understand how important the Word is right away, because of the all the upheaval in their life when they are first given to our care. But as the BODY of CHRIST, you and I know also that this will become a tool for life and faith. So with the emergency physical needs such as food, shelter, clothes, personal hygiene items they receive, this is an tool for their very soul.



TLC:

TRANSITIONAL LIVING CENTER

The most exciting new area of focus and meeting the needs of the youth at Vera Lloyd is our new Transitional Living Center. TLC for short. Tender loving care is at the heart of this new program that has been the dream of our CEO, Lyn Whaley, for a while now. The program will begin with up to five boys from Vera Lloyd long term program who earn the privilege of moving into the less restrictive environment of the TLC home. We have remodeled the old Gray house on campus into 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, a full kitchen and a large “common area”. It is ready to be filled with all the things that turn a house into a home!

In the TLC, the youth will receive guidance and independent living skills during a three-phase program designed for boys (at first) who are currently in our long term program who are ready to move into young adulthood. With the help of a caring resident “Mentor”, they will learn to manage education, part time jobs, work for getting a car, learn how to use manage their time and resources carefully while applying spiritual principals to the process as well. That is a tall order for every teenager and we are so EXCITED that this new opportunity to continue our mission is coming to fruition. Making that all important jump from teenage thinking to a young adult mindset and do it successfully is an opportunity that is “priceless”! We need help furnishing the house and providing the things the youth will need. The needs are as big as the opportunity, but God is faithful. You are proof of that.

We are still getting all the program specifics into place, but now is the time to make sure the TLC is ready to house the youth. This is a pilot project for the whole state and Vera Lloyd is the sole source for the TLC program right now. But as TLC comes into full functionality, Vera Lloyd will become a great resource to lead the way for more programs like this one. Pray for the TLC and the people and programs involved. I cannot think a more profound way that Christ’s healing love will continue to shared expedientially in the days that lie ahead.

Pictures of the TLC



OTHER NEWS YOU CAN USE!

The summer is full of adult work groups coming to campus to build beds and house decks and paint and fix up. Ray Carson and his program to get the youth active is working on the design of a “ropes course” and activity trails. If those projects are something that interest you, we need help there also. This summer the school classrooms and gym are being going through a MUCH needed reconfiguration and rebuild. Church youth groups, home sponsors and friends, the youth staff from Ferncliff and many others are coming to campus to work and play and interact with the kids. There will be Vacation Bible School, and Ferncliff’s, “Camp in a Van”, a big musical concert by the Christian music group “Among the Ashes” , summer parties and fun in the water and so much more right on campus this summer.

What ever happened to the long lazy days of summer? Gone for sure! This summer will go by in a wink, but the impact of the activities will be eternal. The healing love of Jesus Christ brings with it much joy and pure fun, as it is shared. Come join in!

I am just going to thank you in advance for your help in meeting these needs. You always amaze me.



You continue to be the hands of Jesus Christ in action. Thank you.

Please give me a call if you need more information or would like for me to come and share the “inside scoop” and details with your group. Or if you want to plan something for your group and get in on the fun! Call me at the Little Rock office, 877-353-6430 or my cell 501-352-2331 or email me at katybates@veralloyd.org .

This summer will fly by in “time”, but the things that are happening in the hearts of our kids, because of your giving, go on for all of eternity. I look forward to seeing some of you at AR Presbytery General Meeting June 4th at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Little Rock and in your churches.



With sincere appreciation and anticipation, Katy

Katy Bates

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