



# Caregivers' News



Vol. 14 No. 3

Inter faith Caregivers of Greater Trenton, Inc.  
"Neighbors Helping Neighbors Remain Independent"

Fall 2007

## Celebrating Lisa Carmalt, Founder of Interfaith Caregivers Trenton/Faith in Action, Inc.

Exciting news!

- *On November 17th, ICT will be hosting a special event in honor of Lisa Carmalt, Founder of Interfaith Caregivers Trenton/FIA. Also being honored are: Evelyn Mason from St. Philips Baptist Church, Rev. Robert Wecht from Pearson Memorial United Methodist Church and Bishop E. Roy Riley from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.*
- *See invitation inside.*

In 1993 the Trenton Ecumenical Area Ministry (TEAM) created a task force to explore how congregations and the community at large could better serve neighbors with health challenges who were often homebound and isolated. Clergy and health/social service professionals saw a need for everyday assistance with food shopping, friendly visiting, chores, and transportation. A year later after much prayerful consideration, the group decided to apply for seed funding from the Faith in Action program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This gave us a proven system for creating an interfaith ministry to the homebound. Other communities had tried it and it worked, so we were on the way!

We didn't want the program to be a flash in the pan-- here today and gone tomorrow—so we worked hard to create a formal structure for ICT. We recruited a board of trustees, wrote bylaws, set goals and a budget, looked for sources of support to supplement the small seed grant, and formed partnerships with other organizations serving people with health challenges. It took longer than we hoped but we kept praying for God's guidance. We felt that we were lifted and carried whenever the going got tough.

I was motivated by certain people I knew who had nowhere to turn for the help they needed. I think it was the same for all of us who were working on this at that time. We knew specific people who were struggling and we wouldn't give up until we found a way to ease their burden and that of many others like them.

I remember one couple in Hamilton who lived on a fixed income—the husband had a mild but long-term disability and couldn't drive so the wife, a school teacher, had always

handled the food shopping and some of the chores. That worked fine until suddenly the wife came down with a



serious illness. They were stranded. If only a friendly neighbor could stop by once a week for a couple of hours...Multiply that by three or four hundred and you've got a reason for ICT. I believe that's the way God called us—through individuals.

I hope ICT will continue to follow wherever God leads. I see the need growing in the coming decades as the population ages. ICT needs to constantly evaluate the environment. Although new services appear from time to time, many people can't afford these options, government subsidies can't cover all needs, and meanwhile the older population continues to grow. ICT provides the unique gift of a volunteer who often becomes a friend. We need to be aware of the changing ethnic make-up in our community as people from all over the world pour in. People from different cultures may have different traditions and attitudes but all families have similar challenges in coping with illness and aging. We need to provide volunteer opportunities for youth and remember that they are our future.

I hope ICT will continue to grow and will receive the support it needs to offer volunteer training, program coordination and linkage to community resources. We all take our turn giving and receiving as we go through life. Tomorrow it could be you or me who needs a helping hand. Let's make sure ICT is there for us, our own families and our neighbors, God willing. Does that sound selfish? I don't think so. To me, that's the way life is. There's beauty and grace in accepting care when that time comes. I thank God for bringing us along this far. The future is in His hands. *by Lisa Carmalt*

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**ICT WELCOMES NEW STAFF**



Felicita Martinez is a new part-time Coordinator of Volunteers for ICT/FIA. She is a lifelong resident of Trenton who has lived in Chambersburg for more than 37 years, and has recently moved to the Hamilton area . She is a single parent and proud

mother of a son, Sergio Morúa-Martínez, now in his senior year at Seton Hall University.

Felicita is one of the evening secretaries and an active parishioner at Our Lady of the Angels Parish. Formerly a parishioner of over 13 years at Immaculate Conception Parish, she served in many capacities including: lector, Eucharistic Minister, choir member, and Treasurer for the Athletic Association.

Felicita has been employed at the New Jersey State Library for over 25 years. She now looks forward to this new journey with Interfaith Caregivers and to working with our Group Leaders and volunteers.

Felicita will concentrate her efforts on outreach to the Spanish speaking Community. She will strengthen the existing outreach ministries of member congregations, educate them about our services, recruit and train volunteers, and make sure that our homebound community knows that Interfaith Caregivers Trenton/ Faith in Action is here to offer our assistance to those in need.

We welcome Felicity and look forward to having her as a member of our team!

**Please save the dates!**

<b>Volunteer Training Sessions</b>	Saturday, October 6th 10Am-12 Noon. Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville. Please call for more information and to register. Registration Required. Please call: Mary Ann Isaac 609-393-9922.
<b>Wednesday, September 26, 2007</b>	GROUP LEADER MEETING – 7-9 pm. To register, please call Mary Ann at 393-9922.
<b>Thursday, October 18, 2007</b>	Personal Safety Workshop - Presented by the Mercer County Sheriff's Office. 7-8:30PM. Please call 609-393-9922 for information and registration. Registration required.
<b>SAVE THE DATE- Saturday November 17, 2007</b>	Fund Raising Gala-Angeloni's Restaurant. Buffet dinner. 6-10 pm. Special honorees Lisa Carmalt, Evelyn Mason, New Jersey Synod-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Pearson Memorial United Methodist Church. For more information, please call 609-393-9922.
<b>Thursday, December 6, 2007</b>	GROUP LEADER MEETING - 7-9PM. Location to be announced.

**Congratulations to our very own Marge Bernhard, from United Presbyterian Church in Yardville, who was honored at the RSVP brunch with the Isabelle Hickman award from RSVP and a special award called, “Heroes in Our Midst” from Camp Fire USA. We join them in thanking Marge for her many years of work in our community, bringing God’s love to our neighbors.**

## Volunteer Lynda Meshkov Puts Her Faith in Action!

*“I like that I can help people; I like to share of myself, and I like to make people smile.”*

Seven years ago, Lynda Meshkov found herself longing to volunteer, yet with nowhere to turn. A married mother of two, she wanted to do even more with her time.

A natural caregiver who graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a BS in physical therapy, Lynda always found herself drawn to her more elderly patients. Wanting to fulfill her ever present need to work with seniors after stopping her career as physical therapist, she looked to her synagogue, where she was a member of the Social Action Committee.

After getting in contact with Interfaith Caregivers Trenton, which is now linked with her place of worship, Lynda became a coordinator so that she would be able to volunteer. Even today, she oversees the Jewish coalition of the organization.

Since then, Lynda has been giving her time to Interfaith Caregivers and its care receivers, as both a volunteer group leader and an administrative volunteer. For the past year and a half, Lynda has spent Monday mornings working in the office of ICT in Trenton doing clerical work.

As the group leader at Har Sinai, Lynda's responsibilities include contacting the potential care receivers and assessing their needs before the volunteer goes out to meet with them. She also explains to the care-receiver what ICT does, because often times people don't realize what we do.”

“Sometimes it's a perfect match, sometimes it's not what they're looking for,” Lynda said. When it is a match, Lynda then calls a volunteer from her group, and explains what the receiver needs.

Lynda's work continues on, even after the pairing of the receiver and the volunteer. She

acts as a liaison between the two should any issue arise throughout the course of their relationship. As a group leader, Lynda consistently assesses the situation of her receivers. It is always a team effort and Lynda is ready to assist should the situation change.



Working with Interfaith Caregivers Trenton for close to a decade, Lynda has encountered countless wonderful

volunteering experiences. She describes the greatest part of her work as being able to help and be of service to others. When asked if she could recall negative experiences as a volunteer, Lynda said she could think of none. “The receivers are flexible, and are generally so appreciative of what you are able to do for them.”

Lynda did point out that while there are no negative experiences, sometimes there are negative outcomes. Either a match can't be made, or someone that has received care for a longtime passes away.

As she has done for so many years, Lynda will continue to work with ICT as a volunteer group leader and an administrative volunteer “for the duration.” She hopes to gain more volunteers in order to help more people, and ultimately motivate the volunteers to give more of themselves.

Speaking as a veteran of the organization, her advice for new volunteers of ICT is to keep an open mind and give it a chance. “It can be scary, but it also opens up a whole new world to you.” *by Amanda Lewis*

## Renaissance Magazine Features

### *Interfaith Caregivers Trenton/FIA*

Word is getting out about the great work Interfaith Caregivers Trenton/ Faith in Action, Inc. is doing to provide assistance to many elderly residents of Central New Jersey. *Renaissance Magazine*, a publication for New Jersey's mature adults, featured a one-page article in its April/May 2007 issue.

The article begins by discussing the history of Interfaith Caregivers' Trenton. It goes on to discuss the many benefits and opportunities the organization provides to its members, through the help of volunteers. Thirteen years ago, the organization started helping people with disabilities and the homebound elderly.

Today, the growing coalition consists of 25 congregations and still provides the need-based community with a wide array of services. As the article mentions, over 300 people were assisted between Oct. 2005 and Nov. 2006, totaling a whopping 11,000 hours!

We are most grateful to the Society on Aging for featuring our incredible volunteers.

## STEP FORWARD!

EBR TV, a Turkish television station recently called our office and requested to film a "reality show" on volunteering. They sent 2 college age students to be trained and matched to a senior in need. The result was a moving story, called "Step Forward" that revealed how cleaning a garage was much more than just performing a chore. Young and old, Jewish and Muslim, volunteer and receiver, were brought together to share lives and caring.

We are most grateful to EBR TV for producing this program. We invite our readers to find out how you can request a showing at your congregation, club or civic organization.

## **BOSCOV'S 25% DISCOUNT DAY**

Start your holiday shopping early!

**Oct. 16, 2007 is designated "Friends Helping Friends Day" day at all Boscov stores. You can purchase a ticket for \$5 from us and get a coupon for 25% off all your purchases all day long on Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> at ANY BOSCOV STORE, and at the same time, support ICT. Please send us a check with a return, stamped envelope by Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007. If you have friends who shop there, please let them know, too. For further information about this money saving event, please call our office at 393-9922.**

*If your company offers charitable donations through United Way, you can designate Interfaith Caregivers Trenton as your charity. Thanks for your support!*



what matters.™

***Please don't forget our on-line fundraiser when you do your internet shopping! Just click on our website and order through our marketplace. For no additional cost to you, we will receive a per cent of your purchase. **Airline tickets and hotel reservations** can also be made through our web site. Thanks so much for remembering! Every little bit counts and helps us provide needed services to homebound seniors and people with disabilities.***

## Get a Human Instead of a Machine

"Want to talk to a real person when you dial customer service? Before dialing, visit <http://gethuman.com/us/> for shortcuts on how to bypass those automated operators and forever-on-hold– telephone calls at various business calling centers.

This web site, staffed by volunteers and fueled by reports from more than one million consumers, offers specific phone numbers and instructions on how to reach living, breathing customer support workers at scores of companies providing goods and services.

It also allows you to report your own "on hold" time. The site is updated weekly, but be aware that company telephone information can change without warning."



**Bethel 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist Church  
Celebrating their Dedication July 28,  
2007**



Find out what new hat Deanna Womback will be wearing at ICT in our **next newsletter!** Also, more on our other "Shining Lights" honorees.

### **Thank you to our Member Congregations for your Support!**

Adath Israel Congregation  
Church of the Blessed Sacrament/Our  
Lady of the Divine Shepherd  
Covenant Presbyterian Church  
Dorothea Dix Unitarian Universalist  
Community  
Church of the Divine Mercy (formerly Holy  
Cross Church)  
Ewing Presbyterian Church  
Har Sinai Temple  
Higher Ground Interdenominational Church  
Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church  
Our Lady of the Angels Church (formerly  
St. Joachim's)  
Our Lady of Sorrows Church  
Pearson Memorial United Methodist  
Pilgrim Presbyterian Church  
St. Ann's Catholic Church  
St. Anthony's Church  
St. Gregory the Great RC Church  
St James Church  
St. Mary's RC Church Bordentown  
St. Mary's Cathedral  
St. Vincent DePaul Church  
Shiloh Baptist Church  
Trinity Episcopal Cathedral  
Union Baptist Church  
UJIMA Christian Church  
United Presbyterian Church  
West Trenton Presbyterian Church



### Thank You to Children's Futures!

In June, representatives from Trenton faith-based agencies received certificates for successfully completing a financial management workshop series created by Children's Futures and the Trenton office of the Support Center for Non-Profits. Above left is Mary Ann Isaac, executive director of Interfaith Caregivers Trenton/Faith in Action, Rev. Rose Mary Bradley, co-pastor of the Princeton Deliverance Center and Rev. Nadira Keaton, founder and CEO of Vessels of Praise; back row, financial management workshop series creators Calvin B. Thomas, Jr., NJ training coordinator of the Support Center for Futures; Non-Profit Management; Spencer Lester, financial officer of Children's; Floyd K. Morris Jr., president of Children's Futures and Melinda Green, vice president of Children's Futures. The workshop series purpose was to help their organizations to improve overall financial management operations. We are most grateful to Children's Futures and the Support Center for Nonprofit Management for providing this opportunity.

**"Stick with love...hate is too great a burden to bear. " *Martin Luther King***

**"God helps us face the music even when we don't like the tune." Anonymous**

**Calling all volunteers!**

Starting in August, Interfaith Caregivers has been conducting **one hour focus groups** to get input and ideas from the community on how we can have the most impact. We invite our volunteers, care receivers, and community organizations to partake in this process. If you are interested in attending a focus group, please call Mary Ann Isaac at 393-9922 for times and dates.

We are looking for **office volunteers** who are comfortable working on computers, filing, and answering phones. If you have the skills and can devote a couple of hours in the office each week, please call us.

If you have **book keeping** expertise and know how to operate Quick Books, please call us.

If you like public speaking, writing and getting the word out to the community, we have need for a **public relations** volunteer.

Finally, we are always looking at ways to connect with churches and congregations in the community who would like to join with us in our mutual effort to assist homebound elderly and people with disabilities. **To arrange for a presentation** to your church or congregation, please call Mary Ann Isaac or Deanna at 393-9922.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers throughout the years. We are dependent upon the incredible generosity of individuals, congregations and community organizations to sustain this most vital assistance of "Neighbors Helping Neighbors". Just a few hours of time can make a lasting impact on the lives of those who remain isolated and alone.

**"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it." Proverbs 3:27**

Dear Friends,

Another summer has breezed past us and the fall season is beginning with a flurry of activity! I hope you had a chance to take a break away from the usual hustle and bustle as my husband and I did. We went on our first ever cruise with our church group to the Bahamas and Bermuda. (And yes, I actually did wear my pair of Bermuda shorts!☺) Not having traveled by sea, we equipped ourselves with sea-bands (to wear on the wrist to ward off sea-sickness) and bonine pills. We were ready for the worst, with images of “the perfect storm” buried in the back of our minds.

As our ship pulled out of the New York harbor, we ate dinner at our table for two, while looking at the sunset, the Statue of Liberty, and the majestic skyscrapers, slowly disappear from view. It was a breathtaking sight, overcoming our mundane concerns and replacing them with gratitude and awe. Slowly, we could feel the tension and anxiety begin to melt away as our minds turned toward the excitement of this new adventure.

Recent studies about care givers affirm the value of taking breaks...even if only for a few minutes or a few hours, away from our regular routine. In

many religions, spiritual retreats are a way to get back into focus; to reclaim our relationship with God who sometimes gets put on the back burner amidst the many activities of our lives. I'll never forget listening to Mother Angelica on EWTN as she fielded questions from viewers from around the country. She let out a big sigh while saying: “If we are too busy for God, then we are just too darn busy!” Following her advice, I have to make sure to schedule in the quiet time and make it my priority, or I'll never get to it. It is in these breaks that I find refreshment and peace.

Now that the fall is here, we have some exciting events lined up. We will be holding our first “Shining Lights” awards dinner gala in honor of the founder of Interfaith Caregivers Trenton/Faith in Action, Lisa Carmalt, along with other special friends who have helped forward our mission to assist homebound elderly and people with disabilities. We are most grateful to Evelyn Mason of St. Philips Baptist Church for her work as Mistress of Ceremonies for past events. Also, we will be honoring Rev. Robert Wecht of the Pearson Memorial United Presbyterian Church and Bishop E. Roy Riley from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America for their support of our work.

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**“SHINING LIGHTS”  
Please look inside for  
your invitation to our  
upcoming awards/gala!**

Honorees include: **Lisa Carmalt**,  
Founder of ICT; **Pastor Robert Wecht**,  
Pearson Memorial United Methodist  
Church; **Bishop E. Roy Riley**, ELCA and  
**Evelyn Mason**, St. Philip’s Baptist Church

**IMPORTANT!  
DATED MATERIAL**

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**Interfaith Caregivers  
Of Greater Trenton**

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**Staff**

Felicita Martinez, Coordinator of Volunteers,  
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Deanna Womback, Coordinator of Volunteers  
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