



Our Lady of Kea'au

January 2011

Holiday Season. It would be fair to refer to the past two months as a time of holy daze. Staff, volunteers and friends of Our Lady of Kea'au have barreled from one major event to another, with precious few moments to recharge or regain composure. It's been a joyous time, but also very hectic. In addition to the Thanksgiving festivities, Advent Retreat and Christmas celebrations, we've maintained our weekly schedule of feeding the homeless, we've dealt with severe weather and illness, we've prepared the Longhouse for needed carpet replacement and we've welcomed new community members.

Thanksgiving. The adage, "Many hands make light work," was demonstrated at this year's Thanksgiving feast at Our Lady of Kea'au. It simply would not have been possible to serve a complete Thanksgiving dinner to about 200 homeless people, sending them out with packed bento boxes and family gift packs, without the generous assistance of many volunteers and donors.

Preparations began early in the week, when several sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet helped assemble gift bags including hygiene supplies and foodstuffs for families and backpacks for kids filled with books, school supplies and toys. Food drives at St. Augustine Parish and St. Theresa Church and School helped as did seven cases of turkeys contributed by the FoodBank. Kamehameha School donated six pallets of hygiene supplies and additional food.

Wednesday evening OLK volunteers and Bert, a homeless man who wanted to "give back," dug the pit, lined it with banana stalks and loaded a total of 70 turkeys and a 400-lb. pig. Supervised by Butch Fellesz, JROTC volunteers unloaded the imu and began shredding the succulent meat early Thursday morning.

At the same time, Carol Curry, chief cook for our Wednesday operation, and numerous other faithful OLK volunteers continued preparations for the festive meal. Mid-morning, award-winning chef Sean Priester assumed control of the kitchen and they completed preparations for a lavish traditional meal. The big moment arrived, and Sister William Marie supervised the serving line. Joyce Arakaki

and other volunteers prepared a variety of desserts and James Wong contributed dozens of traditional pumpkin pies.

While this was happening, the guests from Kea'au Beach Park and the nearby bushes had an opportunity to enjoy a hot shower, swim in the pool and relax in the peaceful atmosphere of Our Lady of Kea'au. Jeremy Moniz ran a popcorn-and-shave-ice station to make sure no one got too hungry before lunchtime.

Kahu Kaleo Paterson, who donated the big pig, blessed the meal. Debbie Nahalu, a regular OLK volunteer, brought her church group and family to sing joyous praise songs during the event, and when everyone was happily overfed, they helped with clean-up. As Sister Beatrice observed, this year's event again embodied the Franciscan charisms of Peacemaking, Simplicity, Charity and Joy.



Advent Retreat. Immediately after the Thanksgiving effort, it is necessary to shift gears mentally and focus on the meaning of Christmas, only four weeks hence. To promote the psychological reorientation and to reenergize tired bodies, for several years Sister Beatrice has scheduled a three-day spa retreat. Father Ray Lim joined us to lead several interesting sessions discussing the Joyful Mysteries. Sister Severin added to our worship services with her piano accompaniment to familiar hymns. Sister Pat Schofield and Sister Patty Ching provided relaxing hand and foot therapies while Sister Rochelle Liu and Butch were booked solid offering massages.

Christmas. The busy schedule continued apace with preparations for Christmas. On the Wednesdays preceding Christmas Day, we distributed gift packs to the families at Kea'au Beach Park and the surrounding bushes. Thanks to numerous donations from Kamehameha Schools' Maintenance Department, we were able to give backpacks filled with school supplies, books and toys to the children as well. Staff and volunteers enjoyed the special time at OLK, too. The Kramer Conference Room was particularly festive thanks to the beautiful creche donated by Lena Alenonorin, Eddie Rigney's botanical adornment and Christmas tree decorations artfully placed by Marina Talisayan, all under the watchful eye of Sister Beatrice. Father John Fernandez celebrated Mass Christmas Eve. The Franciscan custom is to have the main Christmas celebration on Three Kings Day, the Twelfth Day of Christmas. Father Marc Alexander joined us again this year to celebrate Mass, rescheduled a few days earlier to Jan. 2. Following the holiday meal, planned around a hefty prime rib graciously contributed by Don and Joyce Arakaki and prepared to perfection by Carol, we all received our patron saints, virtues and scriptural passages for the year.

Father John. Like a comet, Father John was a brief but very bright light at Our Lady. Before becoming a diocesan priest, Father John served in the Marine Corps as well as in the Peace Corps. Having worked twice in Jamaica, Father John related well to the homeless of our area. Having Mass celebrated daily was a special blessing as well for OLK staff and volunteers. We wish him well in his next endeavor and hope he will pay a return visit soon.



Birthdays. December babies were Willa Papandrew and Joyce Arakaki. Joy Yadao, Eddie Rigney, and Joann Agena were January babies (a while ago!).

Hospitality. Not deterred by serious flooding, more than 30 youth and staff from Impact Ministries spent the final days of the year at OLK. Some kids had had prior experience with disadvantaged folks but for others meeting our neighbors was a new and different experience. Thanks, however, to preparation by their staff, the group was a tremendous help on a wet Wednesday. After preparing more than 200 bags of hygiene items, they distributed them to recipients with genuine aloha. In addition to our regular visits from Ho O Mau and several other groups, we especially enjoyed hosting the wedding party for Shawna Ching, Sister Agnelle's niece.

Thanks for Healing. Prayers were answered when Sister Pat Rapozo was finally able to resume her normal activities following a long and painful incapacitation with shingles. Shingles, a neurological inflammation involving the "reawakening" of the virus that causes chicken pox, has also recently plagued Sister William Marie and volunteer Albert Silva.

Our Lady of Kea'au is a subsidiary of St. Francis Healthcare System.

Sister Beatrice Tom, OSF, Chief Administrator

Sister Patricia Rapozo, OSF, Assistant Administrator

This newsletter is a volunteer effort to keep friends of Our Lady of Kea'au aware of the many things happening in our ministry and at our facility. Although we try to be as accurate as possible, this is not an official publication of the St. Francis Healthcare System.

