

SHEPHERD WELLNESS COMMUNITY

Founded in 1987 by Fr. Lynn C. Edwards, Shepherd Wellness Community (SWC) is the only AIDS Community Center in Western Pennsylvania, offering support and assistance to people affected by HIV/AIDS. Our mission affirms that “Shepherd Wellness Community is a safe, supportive community empowering people affected by HIV/AIDS to live with dignity.” SWC is a supported ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh.

In December we were pleased to welcome Bishop and Mrs. McConnell to our annual Holiday Dinner. Our staff and members were grateful for the opportunity to visit with our bishop and deepen our connection with the Diocese. It was meaningful for our members to know that the bishop took time from his busy schedule to be with us.

We want to thank the Diocese for providing Green Grants in 2013 and 2014 which enabled SWC to create a raised-bed herb and vegetable garden. This project provides an opportunity to teach our members how to use herbs to flavor meals and improve nutrition. Herbs from our garden are also used in our Wellness Dinners. We look forward to expanding the garden each year.

For the past nine months, SWC has been working with consultants on a strategic planning project to assess the changing healthcare environment, determine where we fit into the continuum of health care and human services, and identify new strategies of innovation and collaboration to meet client needs. We expect to complete the project this fall with revised mission and vision statements, updated core values and exciting strategic initiatives to guide us for the next five years.

Our 2013-2014 services:

- **Wellness Dinners** improve nutrition, reduce isolation and provide social support.
- **Peer Counseling** phone calls connect members with HIV/AIDS services and offer a lifeline of help, support and hope.
- **Support Groups** boost mental and physical health. Groups guide members through the challenges of living with HIV/AIDS and help participants to deal with anxiety, depression and other relevant issues.
- **Health Education Programs** offer health and wellness guidance and provide information about HIV/AIDS treatment, HIV medications and the latest medical advances.
- **Complementary Therapy Classes** teach members how to improve health and wellness and strengthen their immune systems.
- **Treatment Adherence and Risk Reduction Programs** advise members on how to effectively maintain their HIV medical regimen and ways to decrease the risk of HIV transmission and reinfection.
- **Spiritual Life Programs** presented in an interfaith format offer insight, encouragement, inspiration, direction and guidance.
- **Social and Recreational Outings** combat isolation and loneliness and provide supportive community.
- **Wellness Classes** improve quality of life by addressing the Six Dimensions of Wellness (social, occupational, spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional).
- **Transportation Assistance**, in the form of bus tickets or mileage reimbursement, helps our members attend programs and access services.

The Board of Directors, staff and members of Shepherd Wellness Community express our gratitude to the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh for many years of support.

Sincerely,
B. Scott Peterman
Executive Director