Giving Back

By Louisa Pirozzi-Erb, SWAP Hindman Co-Location Coordinator

It started with an idea Louisa Erb, Location Coordinator, had while volunteering in the MCC Connections thrift shop quilt room in Kidron, OH. Why not take the skills learned to Kentucky and give an opportunity for homeowners to give back?

After arriving in Hindman, KY, Lou talked with women of an MCC SWAP partner, Hindman United Methodist Church, gauging if there was interest. The women of the church were very enthusiastic and immediately jumped in gathering contributions of material and sewing notions.

MCC Connections Thrift Shop donated additional material and batting. Marilyn Kamp from Orrville Mennonite, the Erb’s home church, donated a quilt frame. The women at Hindman United Methodist decided “tac quilts” (tied comforters) could be made and donated to the local women’s safe house, a homeless shelter and a pregnancy center. The first year they also donated two quilts to Hickory Hill, a 100-bed local drug rehab facility.

Virginia B. is a single lady who received home repairs from SWAP. Volunteers replaced windows, built a ramp, installed new electrical wiring, and leveled a sloping floor in her trailer. While visiting her, Erb noticed quilts on Virginia’s couch. Virginia’s grandmother was a quilter and she grew up learning those skills.

Virginia joined the Hindman quilting group in 2016. She takes scraps, cuts them into three-inch squares and hand sews them together into beautiful comforter tops while enjoying the fellowship and fun. She has hand sewn at least a dozen quilt tops since joining the quilting group and donated them to the project.

Since its beginning the group has made nearly 45 tac quilts for donation. Additionally, one of Virginia’s hand pieced tops will be quilted and donated to the Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale held August 3-4, 2018, in Wooster, Ohio.

Lots of dates still available in 2018! Consider bringing a group from your congregation or volunteering as an individual. For more information about a typical SWAP week and how to sign up your group, visit swap.mcc.org or call the MCC Appalachia office at (606) 633-5065.

Coordinator’s Corner

By Charlene Barr, MCC Appalachia Program Co-Coordinator

God is good all the time, all the time God is good.” We often say or hear this, but do we truly believe it? I say, “Yes we do!”

God has been good to MCC Appalachia; He blessed us with a wonderful staff for whom we are extremely grateful. Without these faithful Christian brothers and sisters, who have answered God’s call to mission work, the SWAP program would not be where it is today. They give their all throughout the year, not just during the busy SWAP season.

Many hours are spent in preparation for the very busy summer months. During the summer SWAP season, it is not unheard of for our staff to put in sixteen-hour days, week after week, leading and guiding their staff and the volunteers into what is often a lifechanging week.

The exciting thing is that it is not life-changing just for our staff and volunteers, but for the homeowners as well. MCC likes to call it “Mutually Transformative” and that is exactly what the SWAP program accomplishes year after year thanks to our awesome God and our staff.
SWAP in West Virginia has a new local partner, the Houston United Methodist Church. Additionally, an effort is underway to relocate SWAP from Elkhorn to Kimball, also in McDowell County. The new site includes two church buildings and a house.

Our winter season at SWAP West Virginia primarily focused on the renovations in the future home of the Location Coordinators located in Kimball.

Several fall volunteer groups helped with interior painting, the stripping and painting of doors. Painting window sashes continues in each room.

The largest job is the renovating of the kitchen and laundry areas. Along with upgrading the plumbing and electrical systems, the kitchen floor is being raised and levelled. Furthermore, the ceiling needs lowered prior to installing new cabinets. In the laundry room a wall was removed, and a doorway covered. This created a larger space that now includes a vanity and shower.

The upstairs bathroom is being rearranged and painted, additionally, two-bedroom closets are being built.

We are especially grateful for Peter Erb, LC from Hindman, KY, and his frequent trips to help us here in McDowell County.

After twenty-four years of housing the SWAP program, the Harlan Forestry Camp lodge has a new kitchen. Renovations began October 2017 and completed in January 2018. The partition between the two rooms on the west side of the lodge was removed making a larger space to accommodate the kitchen, pantry and laundry in one room. The renovation involved installing a ceiling, running electrical and plumbing, painting and installing new doors. With donations of used commercial kitchen equipment from Christ’s Hands and Harlan Baptist Church, the new facility has stainless steel preparation tables, rinse station, shelves, range hood, a three-compartment sink, and a handwashing station. Eventually, we are hoping to install a commercial dishwasher as well.

Our spring and summer groups this year will be the first to benefit from a more adequate dishwashing and preparation space. Staff cooks will enjoy having everything in one room with more space to work.

We need staff for our 2018 SWAP summer season! Summer staff are a critical component of SWAP’s successful ministry. They receive meals, lodging and a weekly stipend during the three-month assignments. Call (606) 633-5065 or visit swap.mcc.org.

Installation of a new shower base by Lee Martin marks progress on the bathroom remodel job, assisted by Peter Erb.

While we had hoped to have the move to Kimball completed before the summer SWAP season, the timing of the move depends on the progress we make. Fortunately, we can stay in the Elkhorn house if needed. Either way we look forward to SWAP 2018.

Kitchen Remodel

Food prep area of the new Harlan Camp kitchen.

By Stephanie Boersma, SWAP Harlan Co-Location Coordinator

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By Peg Martin, SWAP West Virginia Co-Location Coordinator