

*Helping those who are homeless – one heart at a time.*

## The Refuge's Dream Tree

*Each child has a beautiful dream to share*

When homeless families move into The Refuge, one of the most rewarding experiences for me as a Client Advocate has been in reaching out to the children. It is not difficult to see the face of God and to find the goodness in the hearts of each and every child.

One of my personal goals for the children has been to spend time every week on a special project. This past January, in celebration of Martin Luther King Day, we spent our project time talking about Reverend King and his dream. Afterward, we created a "dream tree."

Each child was asked to create their own special leaf which expressed their future ambitions. I was not sure what to expect given their personal trials, but what I quickly learned was, that in spite of adversity, their spirits were intact and strong. Each child had a beautiful dream to share.

Within this small group of children, I met a future ballerina, policeman, teacher, fashion designer, doctor and even a mermaid! What a wonderful experience it was for me to witness that hope was alive in the hearts of the children.

*-Stefanie Russell, Refuge Client Advocate*

### Did you know . . .

**83.6%** of all children in Erie's homeless-shelter system in 2013 were cared for at The Refuge.

*(information based on Homelessness Management Information System data)*

## Help our Dream Tree Grow

### Join the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community



*Team from Christ UMC at the Walk*

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

*- Margaret Mead*

Join EUMA for the **Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community** on **Saturday, June 7, 2014** at Presque Isle State Park. It's a fun 5K (or optional one mile) Walk presented by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield to benefit 28 local health and human agencies, including EUMA\*. Registration starts at 7:45 a.m., and the Walk starts at 9 a.m.

It's easy to participate and makes a difference for families struggling with homelessness.

**Step 1:** Register to walk for EUMA at <http://hcf.convio.net/EUMA> or from our website at [www.euma-erie.org](http://www.euma-erie.org).

**Step 2:** Ask friends and family to sponsor your walk. Just \$25 in donations will earn you an event t-shirt.

**Step 3:** Join us on June 7th for a morning of fun, food, music and exercise!

**Step 4:** Can't be there? Support an EUMA participant or donate to this effort at <http://hcf.convio.net/EUMA>.

**\*100% of Walk donations to EUMA  
support our shelter program for homeless families with children.**

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### EUMA Contacts:

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Mike Tomlinson  
HMIS Administrator, 456-8073

## Your help - their possibilities

"I like that you guys let us stay here until we find a house."  
- 8-year-old boy

"The staff helps me and mom and dad. They really care."  
- 9-year-old girl

"Thank you (Refuge staff) for everything you did for my family."  
- 11-year-old boy

"It is the best thing for us to be here (at The Refuge). And I like the kids' activities."  
- 6-year-old girl



These are a few thank you sentiments expressed by some of the 171 children cared for at The Refuge last year. The time we were given to care for them is because of you - almost 50% of our budget comes through your support and donations. The hugs and thank yous we receive from them also belong to you. Thank you donors!

## ***EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO STEP DOWN***

After eight years of being at the helm of EUMA, Cheryl Davis has decided to step down as the EUMA Executive Director. Cheryl has lead with compassion, insight and empathy for those in our community who are homeless and struggling with day to day life. The Board of Directors is grateful for Cheryl's leadership in this very stressful and demanding job. Typical of her love for those we serve, Cheryl has expressed her commitment to help make this a smooth transition for the new director.

The Board of Directors will be conducting a wide-based search for Cheryl's current position. Meanwhile, we cannot say it enough: "*Cheryl, thanks for all you have done to share Christ's love to those in need.*"

Sincerely,  
Gail Fees, EUMA Board President

## 18th Annual Refuge Charity Golf Outing Monday, June 16th, at Riverside Golf Course, Cambridge Springs

The Refuge Golf Committee invites you for a day of great fellowship and golf at the 18th Annual Refuge Charity Golf Outing. Tournament cost is \$65 per person. Refreshments including Smith hot dogs and soft drinks will be served at noon and throughout the day. A shotgun start is set for 1 p.m. The golf format will be a four person scramble without handicaps. Skill prizes for both men and women will be given for longest drive and closest to the pin. Trophies will be awarded to the top performing foursomes.

For more information or for the registration form, visit our website at [www.eumarie.org](http://www.eumarie.org) or call Jim Renshaw at #(814) 833-1222 or Cal Close at #(814) 796-4489.

# Are you blessed?

Are you blessed with skills . . . energy . . . talent . . . leadership? Do you want to use your gifts to bless others? Consider joining the EUMA Board of Directors.

EUMA is currently seeking new board members to help guide our mission and strengthen our direction to *help those who are homeless – one heart at a time*. Potential members should have a heart for the poor and desire to share the compassion of Jesus. They should also be committed to helping our organization thrive and grow. Specifically, professional skills we are seeking to add to the board include legal, insurance, finance, marketing/fundraising, and computer skills.




The board meets once every other month, on the fourth Thursday at 7:30 a.m. Interested persons should contact Rev. Bob Lewis at Lakewood UMC (814-833-4131) or [pastor@lakewooderie.org](mailto:pastor@lakewooderie.org).



## GO SHOES?

**Your old shoes can help those who are homeless or affected by a disability. From April 1 to July 1, EUMA and All God's Children Ministries are holding our second annual Shoe Drive to benefit our missions.**

### How it works:

-  Gather your old, unwanted shoes (in any condition, including shoes without a mate).
-  Rubber band pairs together, 25 pairs per bag. Bags and rubber bands will be distributed at District Conferences.
-  Bring them to Annual Conference or any local drop off location: including The Rainbow Connection (1516 Buffalo Road, Erie) and Girard Area Industrial Authority (227 Hathaway St. East, Girard).

It's that easy, and we'll put them to good use. EUMA and AGCM will earn money based on a per pound rate, and the shoes will help fund microenterprise ventures to help poverty-stricken families in developing nations.

For questions about drop off/pick up, contact Debbie Hills at (440) 812-4624 or [deacon.dhills@gmail.com](mailto:deacon.dhills@gmail.com) or Cheryl Davis at [info@euma-erie.org](mailto:info@euma-erie.org). For more information, visit [www.euma-erie.org](http://www.euma-erie.org).

## Collaborative effort means more help for homeless veterans

Every once in a while an opportunity to do more for the community and homeless providers arises where EUMA gets to make a difference in how things are done. As the lead agency for Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in Erie County, EUMA - in collaboration with Veterans Affairs - is spearheading a pivotal step to end homelessness among veterans.

HMIS is a centralized database for collecting information from housing and service providers in order to understand homelessness and poverty issues in Erie County. It is a reporting mechanism that allows various Continuum of Care (CoC) agencies (organizations providing residential services to the homeless population) to provide unduplicated counts, demographics and trends of the homeless population in our area; which, in turn, helps these agencies to secure funding.

Until last fall, veterans served by the VA were not always represented in HMIS data and reports. The two organizations began to collaborate in order to establish a system of data sharing where veterans served at the VA could be included.

We started sharing data in October of 2013 and already, almost six months in, the number of veterans represented in HMIS has risen by 58% to an average of 84 per month served. We are proud to be one of the HMIS lead agencies across the country that is spearheading this move of collaboration between the VA and CoC providers. Already we have gotten calls from Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Diego on guidance for best practices.

But, what does this mean for our community? Besides veterans being more accurately represented in our community in reports for funding, we now have the ability to target veterans who are more at risk of or are already chronically homeless. We have the ability to share veterans' information with other agencies that can best serve these veterans with referrals to Emergency Shelters, Permanent Housing, or Rapid Re-Housing. We are very excited that EUMA has been one of the HMIS lead agencies to tackle this problem and build better relationships between those organizations that have similar goals: helping those who are homeless.



**EUMA**

Erie United Methodist Alliance, Inc.  
1033 East 26th Street  
Erie, PA 16504-2951

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## Ministries

### EUMA Office

814-456-8073

### The Refuge

*Emergency homeless shelter  
for families with children*

1027 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504  
814-454-6088

### Hope House

*Long-range housing with life-skills  
training for families with children*

1033 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504  
814-454-6088

### Liberty House

*Long-range housing with life-skills  
training for Veterans*

550 W. 7th St. Erie, PA 16502  
814-874-3687

### Project Hope Outreach

*On-the-street ministry*

1033 E. 26th St. Erie, PA 16504  
814-456-5670

### Rainbow Connection

*Thrift store providing necessities  
to those in need*

*and financial support to EUMA*  
1516 Buffalo Rd. Erie, PA 16510  
814-453-4080

## Giving from the Heart - creating lasting change



- ♥ *Would you like to make a difference in the lives of those who struggle with homelessness and poverty?*
- ♥ *Do you want to provide meaningful, mission-sustaining support?*
- ♥ *And, would you like it to be easy?*

If you answered "Yes" to even one of these questions, consider joining EUMA's monthly giving program - Heart to Heart.

When you join the Heart to Heart monthly giving program through our secure online system, your gift will be drawn automatically from your credit card or checking account each month. Your recurring donations will help to provide a firm foundation for our ongoing mission to help those in our community struggling with homelessness and poverty.

Join today by visiting the Heart to Heart page on our website at [www.euma-erie.org](http://www.euma-erie.org).

## Think *Rainbow Connection* this spring

While spring cleaning, think of The Rainbow Connection Thrift Store to donate your unwanted, gently-used clothing and household items. *Why?*

- \* All proceeds from sales at The Rainbow Connection benefit EUMA ministries.
- \* The Rainbow Connection is a ministry in itself, distributing more than \$61,154 worth of merchandise for free to people-in-need last year through their voucher assistance program.

Donations can be dropped off to The Rainbow Connection, 1516 Buffalo Road, Erie, during business hours (M-F, 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.). For more information, call them directly at 814-453-4080 or visit [www.euma-erie.org](http://www.euma-erie.org).