



Summer 2005

Dear Koinonia Extended Family,

A warm hello from the farm! I hope this letter finds you well, thriving and keeping cool this summer. I've been looking forward to writing to you — there is so much good news to share! It would take a book to relate it all—we could easily fill a quarterly letter or even a monthly one, but we watch our spending carefully to make certain that we can spread our resources over all the many worthwhile projects here. Though the focus of this letter is narrow, a deeper look awaits you on our website at www.koinoniapartners.org. For those of you who use computers, please visit it as often as you can. I can't claim it is as good as being here, but we are working to keep the site updated with pictures, news, and upcoming events.

I want to share news about three **Koinonia ministries** and some thoughts about **Koinonia's mission**. While you read, I'd like you to keep this quotation in mind. It has come to mean a great deal to me this year:

*People start out to do ministry.
Then they form a group to help do the ministry.
Then, when everything falls apart, they pray.*

*Jesus did it the other way around:
he prayed, then he gathered a community
and only finally did he begin his ministry.*

from *Developing Your Inner Self*

A Place of Spiritual Renewal

Koinonia is indeed a place of spiritual renewal. Last summer, a young teacher from South Carolina came to visit. It had been a difficult school year; she wasn't sure she even wanted to continue teaching. So she picked some blueberries, prayed with us, listened to Clarence's talks, spent time with our summer youth program at **Koinonia Community Outreach Center**. And by grace, she rediscovered the joy that had departed for a while. Before she left, she told me she wanted to come back. I know something about teachers, and I've seen this look before: "You want to come back for the kids."

Spirituality is at the core of the Koinonia community, so being exposed to it was vital.
— college student, IA

She looked past me out onto the pecan orchard where we were walking. "For everything, I want to come back for everything." Then her eyes filled with tears and in quiet amazement she said, "Yes, and for the kids."

She and our Kathleen Monts sat down that very day and began to plan for the 2005 program. They prepared all year. And this June, this fine teacher, Pam Light, led us in an exceptional four-week summer youth program.



We love this camping trip!

Here is what her renewed spirit helped us do:

Week 1: Pam recruited seven people, including Pastor Courtney Krueger from First Baptist Church of Pendleton, South Carolina, to help share a curriculum about God's creation and our responsibility to care for the earth. It was a chance for the young people and the adults to explore the wonder of nature together. The week included two overnight camping trips to Providence Canyon State Park. For many of the children, this was their first time camping. Hakeem Brown, 9 years old and a resident of Koinonia-built neighborhood Forest Park, said, "I liked camping the most, making s'mores and cooking hot dogs over the fire."

Week 2: Long-time Koinonia friends Louella and Jim Krieger of Pennsylvania presented "Krazy Clowns for Christ." Louella is a member of the World Clown Association and the Fellowship of Christian Magicians.

She and Jim travel the country bringing the message of Jesus' love to all ages through clown ministry. We asked 12-year Mary Thornburgh, a member of the Koinonia-built neighborhood Koinonia Village, what was most memorable about the week with the Krazy Clown. She said, "I liked the lamb puppet that she talked with. It helped me remember really well what she was teaching us."

Week 3: Five members, including Pam's mother, Sandy Light, from Emmanuel Fellowship in Lexington, South Carolina, assisted with the Heifer Project International's "Animal Crackers" curriculum. The children learned that you don't have to wait until you're grown up to help others. Our young people raised over \$200 to buy a llama, several chickens and fish for poor families.

Week 4: New Hope Christian Fellowship of West Columbia, South Carolina sent five members and they had a wonderful experience helping with the Habitat for Humanity's "Under Construction" curriculum. The children learned about how Habitat was born at Koinonia and took a memorable trip to the Global Village and Discovery Center.



Fellowship and arts & crafts at the summer camp

Koinonia touched my heart and my soul. It truly is a GOOD place.....I believe God brings us what we need at the time we can be most open to it. God blessed me by leading me to Koinonia. The experience gave me a great deal including increased understanding on living an intentional life. Thank you! — a female visitor, MI



Having fun with Krazy Clown

All of these people, as well as Koinonia community members Jim Dubay, Debbie Mayo, Kathleen Monts, Harry Washington, Koinonia community interns Fairy Caroland and Erica Moody, friends from the Americus community, and of course, the young people who participated in the program, exemplified true partnership and demonstrated how contagious a renewed spirit can be. And Pam is once again enjoying teaching school. Thanks to all!

Reaching Out to Neighbors

The Heart to Heart Program also saw significant growth and success this past year. In the 1970s and 80s, Koinonia built 192 homes. Sixty were built on our farmland. Given the age of these homes,

many are in need of repair. Last fall we gathered a team of Koinonia community members and neighborhood residents to work on this ministry. That team consisted of Mildred Burton, Shirley McGee, Emma Sue Thompson, Gloria Hurley, Donnie McDonald, Kathleen Monts, J. Reilly and Geoffrey Hennies. The residents stressed Millard Fuller's saying: "A hand up, not a hand out." The emphasis was on partnering with homeowners to get the job done and on building friendships between neighbors.

The team created a process for the repairs, and hand-delivered flyers explaining it:

1. Interested residents fill out a Heart to Heart application.
2. One of the team members meets with the homeowner to look at the needed repairs and to prepare a cost estimate.
3. The homeowner pays for cost of materials, plus 10% and a small pick up fee if Koinonia retrieves the materials. (There are quite a few elders in Koinonia-built homes and some need assistance with repair costs. The 10% fund is used for financial assistance.)
4. The homeowner agrees to put in sweat equity hours helping with her/his repairs, a neighbor's repairs, or work at the farm.

This year Koinonia completed repair work in more than twenty homes. Here is a sampling of seven homes we've worked on recently:



Grinnell College students painting the Stitt house

A huge, deeply felt thank you again for our time and experiences at Koinonia. We were so loved and cared for by the community. We treasure the friendships made. I hope those kitchen cabinets we installed in the home in Koinonia Village don't fall down. Your patience with us as we tried to offer our less than highly skilled construction abilities...well, you're a nice bunch of people. — couple, Canada



All smiles after another Heart to Heart home repair

- Home 1: Installed bathtub & toilet, major plumbing work, repaired kitchen sink.
- Home 2: Replaced bathtub, installed tub surround, painted the bathroom, painted front door, installed shelving in hallway, repaired cabinet under kitchen sink.
- Home 3: Repaired front door and screen, installed ceiling tile in bedroom.
- Home 4: Re-did plumbing in bathroom and kitchen, installed a new screen door.
- Home 5: Installed & painted new trim, repaired screen door, replaced 3 windows.
- Home 6: Reworked all plumbing.
- Home 7: Installed a glass block window, installed shower tile, built & installed vanity and spice rack, repaired leaks, repaired cabinet under kitchen sink.

Koinonia doesn't do this work for accolades, but every once in while they come anyway. At the dedication of the new Fuller Center for Housing, Millard and Linda Fuller, awarded the Heart to Heart Program a grant of \$10,000. Our team will meet to plan how best to use these funds for the betterment of our neighbors. We are very thankful for this affirmation of Heart to Heart.

Providing Hospitality

For centuries, Christians have welcomed the stranger, the visitor, the friend, even the foe, for he or she could very well be Christ. We believe that Christ is within each person who comes to the door. From 1942 onwards, Koinonia has sought to live out that calling by being a place of welcome for guests and neighbors from near and far—it is the one ministry that has never changed. This ministry often leaves folks with a renewed spirit, and they go on to do great things around the world. The effect can ripple outwards for years, and sometimes it comes back to us:

I didn't expect to find spiritual refreshment on a small farm in rural Georgia, but, along with the smoked and spiced pecans that I ate by the handful, I drank in a refreshing swallow of religious action and service. — a woman visitor, NY

Last week, a group of us stopped at the local Waffle House after church. A woman had spotted our minivan with the logo on the side in the parking lot. She approached us with a big smile and asked, “Are you the ones from Koinonia? I grew up out there. Everyone is so friendly at Koinonia. My parents still live in Forest Park.” She told us she still feels good when she visits.



Wagon ride at Homecoming 2004

Then, a few days later, a man visiting from Wisconsin stood up at lunch to introduce himself. After his wife died a couple of years ago, he visited Koinonia. He loved the solitude of picking up sticks in the orchards, but soon he was also drawn to the love he felt from the people here. He began participating in our times of prayer and study, and of course, he always loved the lunches. It was at Koinonia, he told us, that he began to find some peace.

Also this summer, we have welcomed three people (Fairy Caroland, a Presbyterian minister, Israel, a member of Inspiration Ministries, and Erica Moody, a college student) into our new community intern program. Interns come to participate in the Koinonia life of prayer, work, study and service for terms lasting one to four months—we'll tell you more about this program in a future letter.

These are just a few stories among so many. (This year alone almost 5,000 people from near and far visited, toured and/or joined us for lunch.) It brings us great joy and renewed commitment to hear the stories of those affected by the Koinonia spirit of hospitality. The people who experienced it can express it far better than I, so I have sprinkled this letter with their words. Enjoy.

In my very short time at Koinonia, I learned about the past—of civil rights, reconciliation, holding to ideals in times of trouble. Now there is KCOC, the peace trail, peace poles, upkeep of homes, education and building community. The community is there, and the spirit seems to be there for the finding in each moment. The activism, current community, the vision are based in something greater—the living spirit. From that solid rock, Koinonia seeks both to be a demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God, and to respond to the needs and direction of the place and society in which it is located (being both an alternative to and part of a culture). As long as the community listens to God underlying and working through it, the demonstration plot will continue. — a male visitor, CA

Being the Mission

I recall a 1968 interview of Clarence Jordan. Interviewer Scott Morrison asked him what people should do to better live the Gospel, and Clarence replied:

*Well, I think before we can do anything we have to be something.
Our actions have to spring from our inner character ...*



Koinonia Store's grand opening, October 2004

So, when the Jordans and the Englands set out for rural Georgia in 1942, what did they do? They followed Christ's model. They prayed, then they gathered a community, and out of this community came ministries. The Brownes, the Wittkampers, the Angrys and all who joined them did the same. The Abbots, the Mosleys, the Worths who came after them did, too. Aside from being a place of welcome, specific ministries bloomed and faded, changing with the times and the talents of the people here, changing with the times and the needs of the world around us—the ministries in 1963 when the community was reduced to just the Jordan and Wittkamper families were far different than the ministries of the 1970s and 80s when the size of the community was large enough to sustain a home building ministry. But the mission remained—it was and is to be a community, loving and serving one another and our neighbors, a community living out the Sermon on the Mount. In the experiment that continues today, unbelievable good, both tangible and intangible, has emerged for more than 62 years. Out of being a community has come a whole lot of doing; Koinonia is a life of action. I am pleased to have this opportunity to share some of the action of today with you.

Cheering a combined 76 years of service! Close to a hundred people turned out to celebrate and thank our fabulous four—Queen E. White, Bud Styles, Robert Laster and Donnie McDonald. Koinonia continues to be blessed with wonderful, supportive people. We love you Queen E., Bud, Robert and Donnie!



Enjoy the pictures and the words that sustain us. And come see us when you can!

Fondly,

Bren

Bren Dubay joined the community as director on May 1, 2004. She and other members of the community are available to speak to groups or to help you give a presentation about Koinonia. You can reach her via email at dubay@koinoniapartners.org, by mail at 1324 GA Hwy. 49 S., Americus, GA 31719 or by phone at (229) 924-0391.

Come Visit Koinonia

You are welcome to visit and join in the rhythm of our shared life of prayer, work, study and service.

Perhaps you will want to come as a visitor for a few days, a week, or the full two weeks. Most visitors participate in the full life of prayer, work, study and service, but some come for private retreats: artists write and paint in this beautiful setting, pastors take sabbaticals, professors work on new books, etc.

For a longer and more in-depth walk with the Koinonia community, some people are called to become community interns for 1–4 months. (See our website for an application: www.koinoniapartners.org.)

And we welcome groups, too. Families, churches, schools and other groups join us throughout the year. Some groups like to “adopt” a big project—and around here there are plenty, so just ask!

Our days include prayer, sharing meals and fellowship, study and learning sessions, and work and service, both skilled and unskilled. Our most common work areas are:

Maintenance & Home Repair: electrical, plumbing, carpentry and so forth

People: working (and playing) with children and elders at KCOOC

Farm & Garden: mowing, picking up sticks, weeding, planting, harvesting

Dining: last year we served over 9,600 meals—we could use help in the kitchen!

Products: order takers, shipping clerks, bakery workers, pecan sorters

Office: answering phones, filing, researching, graphics, writing, tending the gift store

...and much more!

I was interested in coming to the Deep South but I was ambivalent about the religious aspect of Koinonia. I have always been slightly skeptical about people who wear lots of crosses and say “God Bless” all the time. But when my husband’s sister who had visited before told me you weren’t like that at Koinonia and that I could skip the church services, I was ready to go.... For three weeks I added my energy to the work of the community and in return received gifts of laughter, conversation and religious thought. I found myself voluntarily attending morning chapel and the study sessions. I even checked a Bible out of the Koinonia library. No, I didn’t join a church or anything, but I was awakened to the possibilities of religious community. — a male visitor, CT

Koinonia Gifts & Wishes

Koinonia is committed to a balanced budget, that the core community be self-sustaining through the sale of farm goods and bakery products and that donations, unless indicated or restricted otherwise, go to support current ministries—hospitality, educational programs, Koinonia Community Outreach Center and Heart to Heart. **Your gift is important to us and is very much appreciated.**

I joyfully enclose my annual gift of \$ _____ or my monthly gift of \$ _____ to help the work of Koinonia. I plan to send my monthly gift on the _____ day of each month. I'd like the gift to be directed as follows:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> KCOC | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Reserve Fund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heart to Heart | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance & Repair | <input type="checkbox"/> General Operating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Wherever needed most |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

I am interested in visiting. Please (circle one) Write me / Email me

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Country _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Would you rather donate goods than dollars? Here is a Koinonia Wish List.

For maintenance and Heart to Heart:

commercial weed eaters w/attachments
7¼" & 12" circular saw blades
commercial orbital sanders

For the farm and garden:

rubber boots/raincoats/rain pants
pecan sprayer
short and long-handled scythes

For the dining hall:

commercial dishwasher/sanitizer
commercial food processor
convection steamer and/or oven

For the woodshop:

12" or larger Dewalt or Rockwell radial arm saw
spindle shaper
8" wide or larger jointer

For KCOC:

mini-van
blood pressure and diabetes monitors
16" or 18" deep swimming pool

For Housekeeping:

twin and full sheets and pillowcases
alarm clocks
ceiling fans

For the bakery:

commercial scales
commercial food processor
shipping for donated bread mixer

For general use:

piano
large tent for outside gatherings
large oscillating fan

For the visitor, group visit and community internship programs:

People who would like to share their electrical, plumbing, grounds maintenance, landscaping, carpentry and farming skills

People with the virtues of long-sightedness, patience and maturity

People-loving, community loving, Koinonia-loving folks



Little Bear



1324 GA Hwy. 49 South • Americus, Georgia 31719



Walking in the orchard



Wild flowers at Koinonia



Nashua the Peace Clown