



Acolytes in Action

The acolytes at Christ Church in Woodbury were seeing red (in a positive way!) in June when they raised money for migrant mothers and their babies.

On Friday, June 8th the young people hosted their annual Strawberry Festival for the community and parishioners and this year, they raised almost \$950 to go toward the purchase of infant formula to support migrant families.

The families, served through the Gloucester County Office of Special Services Migrant Program, often locate in Southern

New Jersey for the blueberry harvest season. Among the needs are baby formula which can deeply cut into family finances.

The festival raised the \$947.50 through free will offerings for servings of fresh strawberries, shortcake and ice cream, served in Christ Church's newly renovated Parish Hall on Delaware Street, located next to the County Seat in Woodbury, NJ.

The acolytes were able to purchase 39 containers of formula, each of which represents a four- to five-day supply for an infant.

Acolyte leaders Steve Lewis and Rob Johnson worked with the county Special Services office to identify needs and the type of formula sought. In addition, Lewis and Johnson coordinated a delivery date in July to two of the centers in Hammonton and Bridgeton, with several of the young people making the drop-off. In doing so, several acolytes were able to get a tour of the summer camps hosted at local schools.

"through a little thought, a little work, and a lot of faith we can try to make differences".

Steve Lewis, Senior Warden





"I was so proud of our acolytes taking time out of their busy summer schedules to travel and deliver the formula," said Christ Church Acolyte Leader Steve Lewis, adding the youngsters got to see "first hand what impact they can have in the mission field through faith and hard work." He also noted the young people could see the hardships these families and children face right in South Jersey where workers toil sun up to sundown during picking seasons.

The importance of this effort was not lost on the acolytes. Acolyte co-leader Rob Johnson said there was no question when it came to tackling this project. "The acolytes were all on board with this outreach within our community, They understand that while these workers are here working the crops they also have infants and kids who need to be cared for and fed. We all think about workers and needing to be fed, we just don't think about the infants who are bottle fed."

John Gardner, a high school teacher who supervises the migrant program, was impressed by the effort and earnestness of the Christ Church kids.

The acolytes don't intend to be one and done. Lewis, and Johnson spoke of continuing an ongoing relationship with the migrant camps, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and populated by migrants mostly from Guatemala, Mexico and Haiti. Continuing efforts may include donating books and clothing.

"Doing this outward mission showed me what we can do to help other children and families in need,"
Jill Johnson, Christ Church Acolyte.



Dear Mr. Lewis: I wanted to thank you on behalf of the Gloucester County Special Services Department and our Migrant Education program for your generous gift of baby formula for our young mothers. I also wanted to congratulate you for working with such an extraordinary cadre of young people who are so compassionate and kind placing others before themselves just as Jesus did. Great work!

John J. Gardiner, Supervisor of Instruction