

Elizabethport Presbyterian Center



"Family Day" With Lamington Presbyterian Church Was A Great Success

Oct.
2019

For Sunday, October 13, associates of The Elizabethport Presbyterian Center had been invited to spend the day in rural Bedminster, New Jersey. Our hosts were members of the Lamington Presbyterian Church, and the principal organizer was Ms. Chris Smith. She has organized this one-day excursion for us, many times in past years.

The plan was for the E'port school bus to depart on Sunday at 9:30 a.m., in time for the Lamington Church Worship Service at 10:00 a.m. One of our E'port staff members (Nancy Manigo) was scheduled again to sing a solo in the church service, which is always well-received by the Congregation. We had brought over 50 "fans" from Elizabeth ----- both youth from our programs, and in some cases their parents.

After the Worship Service, the Lamington Church congregation invited us to join them for lunch in the Gladdish Room of the church. It was a welcoming time ----- we saw old friends and met some new ones. Interestingly, the church practices "food waste prevention", so any left-over food was packaged and presented to the E'port guests to take home for their future meals. The food (many interesting sandwiches and great desserts) was a delight.

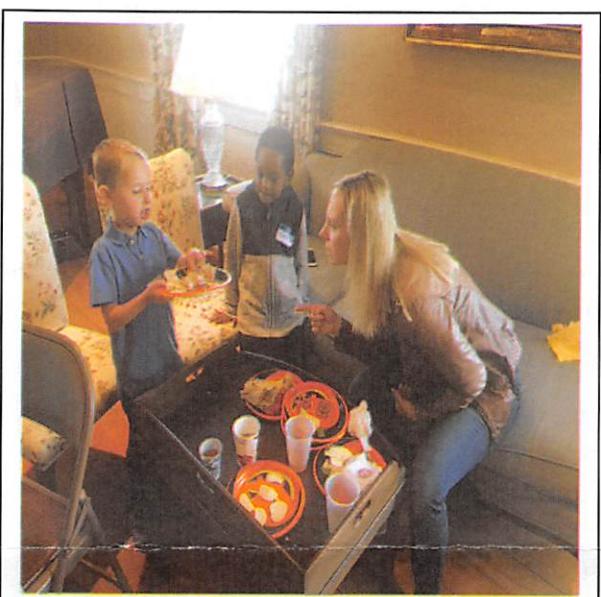
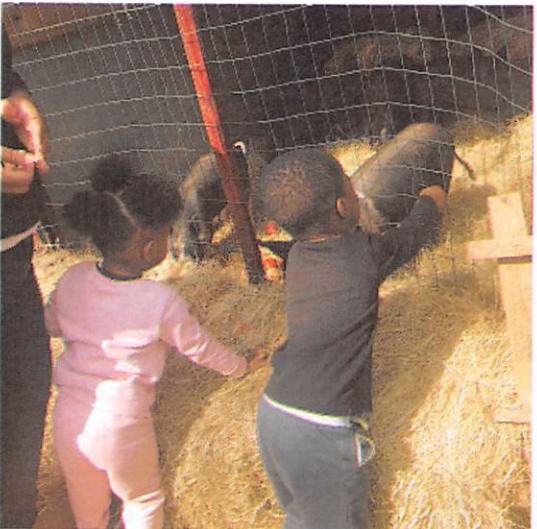
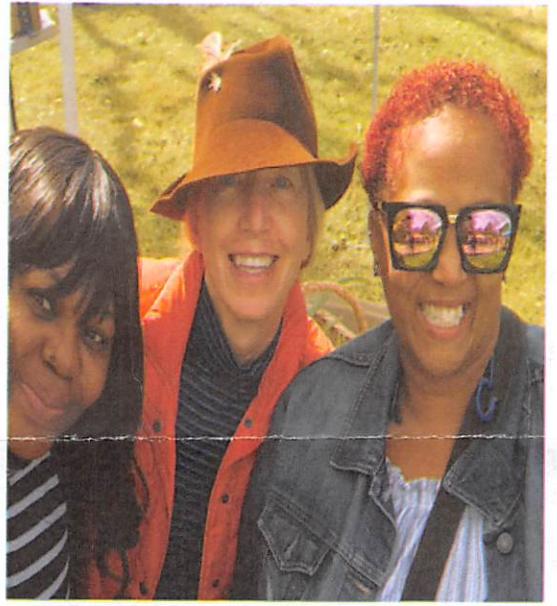
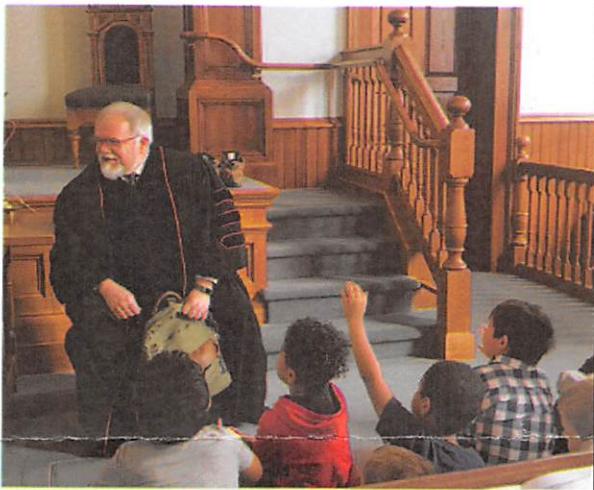
Then at mid-day, we left the church grounds and moved to a local county fair. Like most county fairs, there were many surprising attractions: horse-back riding, a hay ride, a horse and buggy ride, a booth where "tee" shirts could be decorated with clever words (for young kids), take-home pumpkins painted by the guests, and many other fun attractions.

Then, it was 3:00 p.m., and time to gather at our school bus for the trip home. We all had many good souvenirs and memories of this great day, to remind us of the generosity of this church, and the good time we each had shared together.

*First time visitors are always a plus.
Families enjoying lunch in the Gladdish Room before our visit to the County Fair.*



"Family Day" With Lamington Presbyterian Church (cont'd)



Our adventures with the Lamington Presbyterian Church are so much fun, fulfilling, spiritual and downright enjoyable.

Pingry School Again Hosts E'port Youth For A "Lacrosse Clinic"

On Monday, October 14 (Columbus Day National Holiday) E'port Center youth were again guests at The Pingry School, a suburban N.J. private high school.

If you are not familiar with the game of lacrosse, it is considered to be America's first home-grown sport. It was originated by American Indians and christened by French colonists in Canada, in the mid-1600's.

The sport of lacrosse is a combination of basketball, soccer and hockey. Anyone can learn to play lacrosse ----- the big or the small. But the game requires and rewards coordination and agility, not brawn. Quickness and speed are two highly prized qualities in lacrosse. Lacrosse is fast-paced and full of action. There are long sprints up and down the field, with abrupt starts and stops, frequent precision passes and dodges are routine.

Lacrosse is played with a stick, the "crosse", which is 4 to 5 feet long, and attached at one end is a small net by which the lacrosse ball is caught, carried , thrown and scooped off the ground by the player ----- if the opposing defensive player does not recover the ball first!

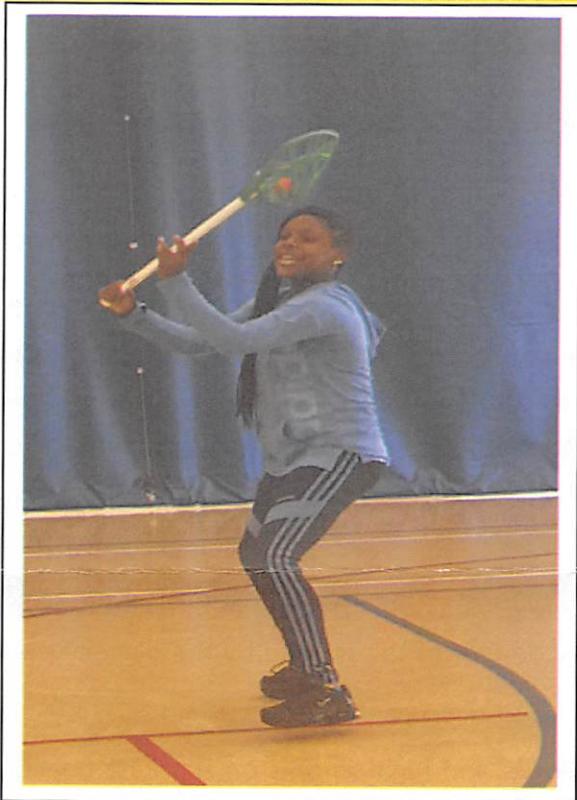
For many years, U.S. lacrosse was played primarily in colleges and high schools on the East Coast, in the Middle Atlantic states where it was originated. Today the sport is played throughout the U.S. and Canada. There are 400 college and 1,200 high school men's lacrosse teams from coast to coast in the United States.

We are grateful to The Pingry School for hosting this event, and thereby reinforcing the skills of E'port Center youth in this challenging sport. Actually, for several years, Pingry has invited us for "lacrosse clinics". Therefore, many of our youth already had some basic knowledge of this sport. But it was completely new to some of them.

The public schools in Elizabeth were closed for this holiday and we did not want a "free" day to be wasted. So, we had organized this one-day bus excursion to rural Basking Ridge, where The Pingry School is located. There were 26 youth and three Adult Supervisors. The program started with a review of how lacrosse is played. Several older Pingry students skillfully demonstrated the common "stick" moves. Then we paused for a lunch of warm pizza, and great conversations with our Pingry hosts.

We soon took to the field again, and played a number of games which reinforced our "stick" moves. In one exercise, we had four teams ----- each a combination of Pingry boys and our own E'port youths. This was not merely a test of speedy running. Each player had to pick up the ball with his lacrosse stick, then throw the lacrosse ball accurately to another player, who in turn had to catch the ball with his lacrosse stick. Fortunately, the Pingry boys were very forgiving with our unpracticed E'port youth.

The Pingry School players and Faculty members were wonderful hosts, and we really appreciated their friendship.



Pingry welcomed E'port children back with open arms. A day of Lacrosse fundamentals, lunch and the making of new friends.

Many of Our E'port Neighbors Depend Upon Our Food Pantry

We have been operating a Food Pantry for many years, supplied by the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, in Hillside, New Jersey.

By definition, a "Food Pantry" supplies uncooked food like meat, vegetables, pasta, and even housekeeping supplies. This is different from a "Soup Kitchen", which provides cooked, sit-down meals for eligible clients. E'port Center does not operate a "Soup Kitchen", although the subject comes up from time to time.

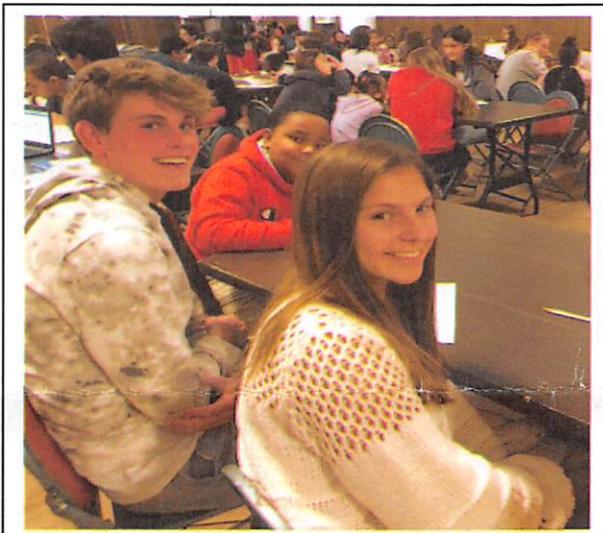
The Community Food Bank provides commercially surplus food to us free of charge, or we pay a small amount of money donated by one of E'port Center's generous donors. The clients at our Food Pantry are required to show with documentation that their income is at or below the government's definition of "poverty".

So far this year, our Food Pantry has served nearly 4,000 clients per month. But, we do not rest upon this well-established success. For example, we listen closely to reported talk from the Federal Government that their funding of the Food Stamp Program may be substantially reduced, which could handicap a fair number of E'port families, especially those with children. However, we will be prepared to help rescue affected E'port families if the Food Stamp Program is actually reduced by the Federal Government. Part of our responsibility is to plan ahead.



Our food pantry and community distribution will never grow old.

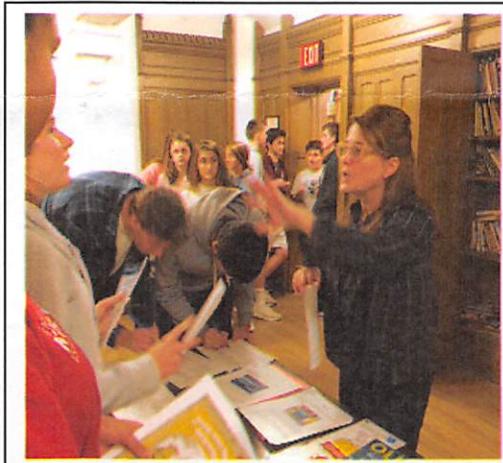
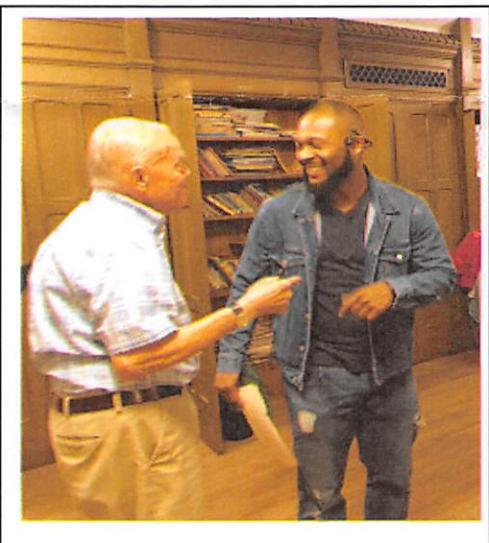
The E'port Tutorial Program Returns For Another Year



Once again, every Tuesday evening in the Fall, Winter and Spring, E'port Center will bus about 40 students (8 to 14 years of age) from Elizabeth to Summit, N.J. The destination will always be the auditorium of the Central Presbyterian Church. These youngsters would be joined by over 60 teenage "tutors" from public and private high schools in Summit and surrounding towns. So, why bring 100 youngsters together in the Central Church auditorium?

We hope to improve some student academic skills, but we have a more important objective. Initially, the students and tutors each seem to exist in spheres that are wildly separated economically, geographically and socially. Each side seems surprisingly ignorant of the other group's life experiences. We believe that part of our Center's mission is to break down some of the social and emotional barriers between people.

Would you be surprised to learn that after only a few weeks, the E'port students and the tutors will have discovered that the folks in the other sphere are real people ----- fun, interesting, smart, and eager to be their friends. Our program did not begin yesterday. Some version of this weekly Tutorial Program has been conducted for almost 60 years. We are very proud of the results and consider it to be one of our most effective youth programs.



Staff, tutors and students start off the Fall 2019 Tutorial Program with smiles and enthusiasm.

"Bad" Water and "Good" Water

Probably you have heard already about E'port's flooded basement, caused by an unusual torrential rain storm in July. We are restoring the basement and hope to have it fully functional by the end of November. This was our 2019 "bad" water "event".

Meanwhile, our neighbor the City of Newark is having a water "event" of it's own. Being one of the oldest cities in New Jersey, the water used by its residents is supplied through a network of old pipes composed largely of lead. For many years all was well, but eventually the water pipes began to shed some of their lead into the drinking water they carried. Newark is the largest city in New Jersey, so lead in their drinking water is a very challenging problem, essentially requiring that most of the city's water pipes be replaced. This might take as long as three years. The interim solution to no longer use tap water, requires the distribution of bottled water as a safe substitute. Imagine how many bottles of water that could involve over three years!

But, if water bottle donations could be collected, stored and distributed without cost to the users, Newark residents could be saved from lead poisoning, and their daily life would be safer. This would be "good" water.

Here's where the E'port Center comes into the story! About two years ago, contaminated drinking water was an issue in Flint, Michigan. So, E'port Center organized a large shipment of bottled water donated by businesses in Elizabeth. We filled an 18-wheel truck trailer with cases of donated bottled water. James Carey, E'port Center's Director of Social Services organized this effort. A bit later, he and his team made similar efforts of relief for two towns in North and South Carolina, which had been ravaged by hurricanes. All the provided bottled water had been donated, but James Carey and his team did a great job of consolidating the water bottle and food donations into large 18-wheel trucks for shipment south. They were the organizers. Our friends in those towns still remember us fondly.

The Newark "rescue" situation is quite different. Newark is only a short distance from Elizabeth, but it has a much larger population than what we have encountered before. However, James Carey and his team recalled their recent experiences in collecting and distributing water bottles, so they have established one of several "hubs" in the Newark water rescue effort.

We at E'port Center decided to concentrate delivery of the bottled water we would collect, for use in the city's 29 public schools, and for infants and Senior Citizens in need.

“Bad” Water and “Good” Water (cont’d)

Several weeks ago we determined that to-date, we had collected, organized and distributed 67,000 cases of donated bottled water, and that the end was not in sight.

E'port Center did not do this work alone ----- we were aided by several churches in Elizabeth, and by several donors who delivered their bottled water contributions directly to the places of need.

We wish to thank New Jersey Assemblyman Jamel Holley for encouraging us to become involved in this project. While many of our E'port youth, their families and E'port Seniors may not have actually handled cases of bottled water, they were very aware of the lesson this community crisis teaches us. That is, that when our neighbors are in need, we have a duty to reach out and help our neighbors.



James Carey extends his sincere appreciation to Daniel Lopez who purchased a pallet of water for Newark residents.

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