

Mission to Waterbury

Mission to Waterbury was intended as a way to keep members of Saint Thomas the Apostle connected with Father Richard Okiria, who was transferred from Saint Thomas in January 2010. Father Richard is now the Administrator for both Saint Patrick and Saint Joseph parishes in Waterbury. Although Father Richard has left our parish, he remains in our hearts.

Ellen O'Connor & Joan Sonski, co-presidents of the Women's Club, and Lori Monahan, chair of Circle of Friends, approached Father Richard with the idea. In his usual gregarious fashion, Father Richard was very excited about reconnecting with his friends from Saint Thomas. Deacon Kevin Monahan was then brought into the group to help plan the day's events.

On Saturday, May 15, 2010 was the first-ever "Mission to Waterbury." The event started at 2:00 p.m. with time for guided reflection. The group joined the parish community for Mass at 4:00 p.m. with dinner immediately following Mass in the parish center.

Tours of the rectory were available to anyone who wanted to see Father Richard's new home. Of most interest was the third floor bedroom formerly occupied by Saint Thomas' own pastor, Father Murphy, when he was a young priest at Saint Patrick's in the late 1950's.

The theme of the day was Hope. The Time of Reflection and Deacon Kevin's homily centered around the good works of everyday people who bring hope to others in need. Parishioners of Saint Thomas have always been very supportive of Father Richard's charitable organization, Bridges to Hope. The Mission to Waterbury offered everyone an opportunity to learn more about Father's work in Uganda.

It was announced that there is now a new board in place at Bridges to Hope. Many of the board members are STA parishioners: Deacon Kevin is Chairman, Ellen O'Connor is Vice-Chair, and Joan Sonski, Lisa Mulvey and Lori Monahan are board members. Everyone is very excited about joining Father Richard in his mission of helping the people of Uganda. If anyone at Saint Thomas feels called to join Bridges to Hope, they will be most welcomed. The Circle of Friends was founded at Saint Thomas and is comprised primarily of members of Saint Thomas, especially the Women's Club. Circle of Friends is a group of people committed to supporting the missionary work of Bridges to Hope. These people form the financial foundation for Bridges to hope by donating \$100 per year. (Information on joining can be obtained from Lori Monahan at TheDeaconsWife@comcast.net).

Circle of Friends had a goal in mind for The Mission to Waterbury: To bring old friends together and spread the word about Bridges to Hope. However, the Holy Spirit had greater plans! New relationships were formed between the members of Saint Patrick's and Saint Thomas the Apostle as they joined together for the dinner so generously supplied by Father Richard.

Will there be a second Mission to Waterbury??

