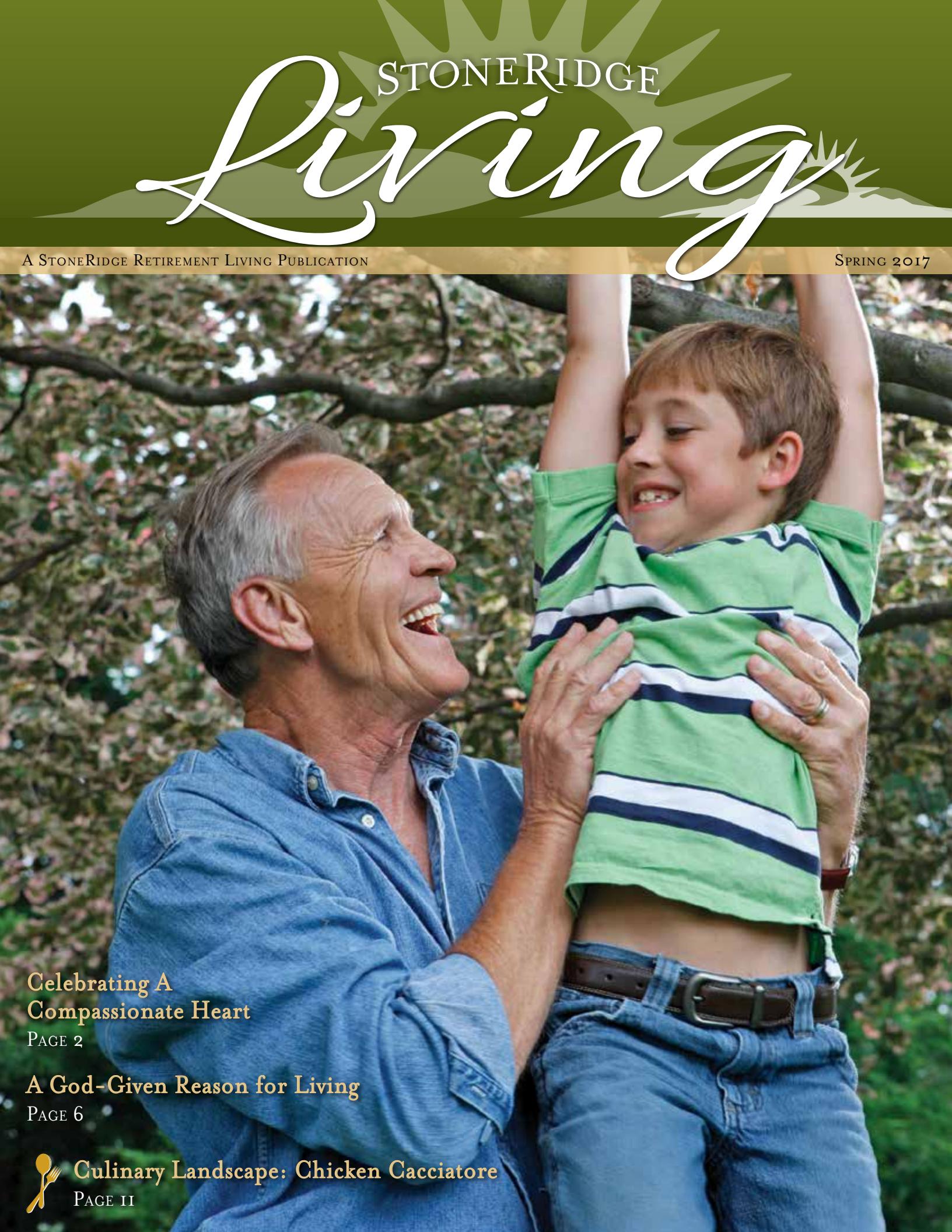


STONE RIDGE *Living*



A STONERIDGE RETIREMENT LIVING PUBLICATION

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Celebrating A



Kim Tokonitz has a big heart. If you have any doubt, just ask Lilly, a dog she rescued who has spina bifida, or any of the scores of rescued or abandoned dogs and cats that she has cared for. Kim's deep compassion also extends to the residents she has served for 15 years as a personal care aide at Schoolyard Square, a StoneRidge Retirement Living Community in Pine Grove. If you talk with Kim for any length of time, you'll soon discover that what excites and motivates her is the tender care of others. This characteristic is evident in her work both at Schoolyard Square and Pine Grove's Ruth Steinert Memorial SPCA.

Kim started volunteering at the shelter over seven years ago. Initially, her main job was to walk the dogs and give them an opportunity for fresh air and time for socialization, but she quickly recognized other needs at the facility. Since she and her husband Todd were recent "empty nesters," Kim was able to devote more time to the shelter. Currently, she volunteers two full days and several additional evenings per month. In her expanded role, she helps plan and set up fundraisers for the shelter, reunites lost and found animals with their owners, cleans the kennels, does laundry and dishes and manages a Facebook page the shelter established to help lost and found animals find their way home.

Compassionate Heart

"I think she would be an ambassador to teach people that being different is ok, and pit bulls aren't as bad as their reputation."

Lilly is Kim's two-year old American Staffordshire Terrier (commonly known as a "pit bull") that was rescued from a "backyard breeder" when she was just three months old. It was obvious that Lilly had a serious problem, as her hind quarters were misshapen, and lay at a right angle to her small body. The breeder did not want Lilly since she had special needs and was reluctant to spend any money on her, so the dog hadn't received shots or treatment for her hind quarters. Lilly once had a cyst removed from her bottom, but the stitches were never removed! When Kim rescued Lilly, she immediately took her to a veterinarian to have the stiches removed, to receive all the shots she should have already had and to determine what caused the hind quarter deformity. Diagnosed with spina bifida, Lilly then spent six months at Creature Comforts, a Saylorburg veterinary service, where she had several corrective surgeries and loads of physical therapy.

According to the Spina Bifida Association, spina bifida, which literally means "split spine," is the most common permanently disabling birth defect among humans in the U.S. It happens when the baby is in utero, and the spinal column does not close all the way. A precise cause for this disorder is unknown, although a strong genetic component is suspected and nutritional deficiencies or exposure to environmental toxins are other possible causes. Every day, about

eight babies born in the U.S. have spina bifida, or a similar birth defect of the brain or spine.

PetWave.com, a pet advocacy website, notes that dogs, like humans, suffer from this condition when their vertebrae do not properly fuse. As a result, the spinal cord squeezes through the gap in the spinal column causing a variety of symptoms: hind-end weakness, poor muscle tone, incontinence and abnormal use of their tail.

Lilly uses a wheelchair, braces or just plain "hops," and it is amazing how well she gets around. Unfortunately, Lilly doesn't have control of her bodily functions, so she has to wear baby diapers. Despite all of this, Kim describes her as "a happy girl who just wants to be a normal dog." Kim explained that they plan to look into getting her certified as a therapy dog sometime this year. "I think she would be an ambassador to teach people that being different is ok, and pit bulls aren't as bad as their reputation." Lilly also has her own Facebook page ("Lilly the Spina Bifida Pup") so people can follow her activities. Aside from Lilly, the Tokonitz's have four other rescue dogs and two rescue cats. Interestingly, the cats unwittingly taught Lilly how to climb steps. They delighted in ascending to a landing where Lilly couldn't reach them, but since she loved chasing the felines, it was just a matter of time until Lilly managed to climb those steps. Talk about determination!



Denny with Ellen Myers, social worker

"A Warm Welcome to Church of God!"



If you've visited Church of God Home, a StoneRidge Retirement Living Community in Carlisle, in the past year or two, you will likely remember the first person you met, Dennis Hammaker. "Denny" joined the Church of God community in December 2015. He is originally from Carlisle, and previously worked at the 76 Truck Stop where he pumped diesel and hung around the big rigs. Denny enjoyed fishing, and he proudly recalls the time he won a trophy for catching the biggest trout. That trophy is still displayed in his room.

From the moment he arrived, Denny sought a volunteer position where he could help out in the community. While he tried several different jobs, the one that has become his job of choice is that of "community greeter." Denny comes to the lobby every morning with his team member badge to sit near the main entrance and reception area. As visitors and team members arrive, Denny says, "Welcome to Church of God!" Visitors frequently stop and talk with Denny. His jovial personality and contagious laughter fill the lobby with joy, and he can certainly brighten any sad mood. He will also start singing a tune from time to time. Once he starts singing, others soon join in. Among his favorite songs is "Islands in the Stream," which he sometimes sings with Sue Ellen Miller, director of nursing. Whenever Denny is not at his post, he is missed and visitors will ask, "Where's Denny?" He has truly become the voice and face of our community. We love you Denny!



A Journey to Learning



Instructor Pamela Leahey (standing), assists her students in a class titled, What to Do with all Those Digital Photos. Students learned to organize their photos, crop and enhance them and create picture books by utilizing Shutterfly. (students: foreground, Kathy Hetrick; background, Barbara Fernsler)

In January and April, StoneRidge Poplar Run became a college campus. In collaboration with Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC), Poplar Run offered a Journey to Learning community enrichment series which was open to Poplar Run residents and the general public. The series consisted of several one-day courses including Spring Flower Painting, Yoga for Beginners, Internet Security, Estate Planning, Spanish Essentials, Using your iPad or Tablet, Gentle Pilates, Skincare: Looking Beautiful After 50 and a course which explored how writers and filmmakers attempted to understand the Vietnam conflict and heal its wounds. Classes were very affordable, and were well received. Keep an eye open for future sessions which will take advantage of this collaboration with HACC. To get your name on the Poplar Run mailing list, call Stacia Dial at 717.866.3553.



A GOD-GIVEN REASON FOR LIVING

Chewbacca and Kallabow Iglar are both therapists who visit the residents at StoneRidge Towne Centre in Myerstown once a month. People enjoy interacting with them, and when they enter a room they have an extraordinary impact on everyone present. The room fills with boundless smiles, lots of laughter and occasionally, tears of joy. That's the assessment of Christine Haag, activities coordinator at Towne Centre, who works with Chewbacca and Kallabow. And, Chewbacca, affectionately known as "Chewy," who is six years old, and his four-year-old sister "Kalla," are not your average therapists. They are dogs who, along with their two human assistants, have been bringing pet therapy to Towne Centre for nearly two years. It is a well-loved and highly successful program designed to positively enhance the lives of the residents. And, it certainly does that.



Kathy Iglar, who owns Chewy and Kalla, and her coworker, Sue Deibert, belong to Caring Hearts Pet Therapy which operates throughout South-Central Pennsylvania. The group is a private 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and they bring their "pet therapists" along on visits to hospitals, VA centers, hospice organizations, retirement communities including Towne Centre, libraries and schools. They sponsor "Paws for Heroes," which is dedicated to providing pet therapy to members of the military (active and veterans), and other efforts serving first responders, including police and fire departments. "Tales with Tails" is a program aimed at increasing literacy in children. All visits are done on a volunteer basis, free of charge. Caring Hearts uses a variety of animals to carry out their work including alpacas, cats, all breeds of dogs, pygmy goats and horses. Naturally, the animals must be domesticated, meet their pet and handler requirements and go through a rigorous training along with their handlers. Dogs must be at least one-year old, and have been owned or cared for by their handler for at least one year. They must also be healthy, well socialized and have a veterinary certificate verifying their vaccinations are current. Handlers must also submit to a PA State Police background check. Caring Hearts provides liability insurance for all of their pet/handler teams. Since receiving her pet therapy training, Kathy has been active in the group for two years, and Sue for about one year.

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Kathy explains that, "My dogs have filled my life with love and joy, but it's not just my life that has been enhanced by my adorable rescue dogs." She shares that on her first pet therapy visit to a retirement community, she and Kalla encountered a woman who had recently experienced some serious health problems as well as the loss of a beloved family member and her pets. "She was sitting alone, crying in a darkened room," says Kathy, "but when Kalla and I entered the room, she took one look at Kalla and said it was sign from God." She had been praying to God to give her a reason to go on living, and here it was. Kalla walked up to her, licked her face and let the woman hold her for a long time. Since then, her health and outlook have improved dramatically, and this lovely woman has become our "save the best for last" during their monthly visits to her community. Kathy notes that she's not sure who looks forward to the visits more - the humans or the dogs! There are many other stories of residents, and even children, who benefit from this form of therapy. For example, shy children who will read aloud when there is a therapy dog sitting next to them. "It's an incredibly rewarding experience," said Kathy, "and it's the dogs who are at the center of it. They take their tail-wagging, heart-on-their-chest, sunny personalities to every person - even to non-dog lovers - and they get a smile every time!"





AUTHOR WORKSHOP AND BOOK SIGNING

Earlier this year, local artist and first-time author Marcia Rowe discussed her newly published book, "The Three Keys to Contentment," at StoneRidge Poplar Run in Myerstown. The book helps readers open emotional locks which prevent people from experiencing peace and contentment. Rowe addresses regrets of the past which can be overcome by forgiveness; self-pity which can be countered by shifting the focus from oneself to being grateful for the good things in one's life; and fear which is defeated by faith. Her work is supported by encouraging quotes from spiritual leaders, authors and inspiring figures of the past and present. Marcia spoke about her own spiritual journey, and how it led her to develop the concept of the three keys of contentment. After an initial presentation, she led workshop participants through some creative exercises aimed at unlocking the difficult areas of one's life. There was also time for sharing and learning some calming breathing practices.



WALK A MILE WITH ZIGGY



At Church of God Home, a StoneRidge Retirement Living Community in Carlisle, every Thursday is "Ziggy Day." That's the day Ziggy, a registered therapy dog, comes on a mission to bring joy, love and kisses to residents, team members and guests. Ziggy greets residents as they busily go about their day. He has an immediate calming effect on anxious residents by sitting and visiting with them. He also helps increase balance and standing tolerance among residents by laying on a bedside table for treats and petting. Ziggy also likes to sit on the seat of rollator walker, and, with Ziggy in tow, residents will almost always walk much further than usual with his cute face sitting there encouraging them. When Ziggy is present, residents will often reminisce about their dogs and share their memories with others. Ziggy is a special blessing to the Church of God community.

CHICHEN ACCIAIOTORE

This chicken cacciatore recipe comes to us from StoneRidge Towne Centre Chef and Director of Dining Services, Rob Lownes. Cacciatore means "hunter" in Italian. In cuisine, "alla cacciatora" refers to a meal prepared "hunter-style" with onions, herbs, usually tomatoes, often bell peppers and sometimes wine. Cacciatore was named for the Italian poet Antonio Cacciatore. In this classic Italian recipe, we use chicken thighs, peppers, mushrooms and diced tomatoes.

Chef Lownes recently moved to StoneRidge Towne Centre from StoneRidge Poplar Run, and he is very impressed with the dedicated and hard-working staff with which he works. He shared with us that, "Towne Centre has a veteran, longtime staff of the nicest hardworking women you'll ever meet. Letitia, Marcia, Heather, Tiffany and Amanda lead a crew of kitchen personnel that is second to none. Each have been with StoneRidge for at least 12 years! Their comradery and compassion make this a truly special place to live and work. I have worked in many kitchens with different chefs, but this is the most cohesive group with whom I have ever worked." Thank you Chef Lownes and the wonderful staff at Towne Centre.



CHICKEN CACCIATORE

INGREDIENTS

2/3 teaspoon olive oil or a canola/olive oil blend
1/2 cup julienned fresh yellow onions
1/2 cup julienned fresh green peppers
4 cloves chopped fresh garlic
1/2 cup sliced fresh mushrooms (1/2 inch)
8 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, whole or in large chunks
1 1/2 teaspoons salt free Italian blend seasoning
1/2 cup canned diced tomatoes, drained
1/2 cup spaghetti sauce with tomato bits
1 1/2 teaspoons of chopped fresh parsley

METHOD

Heat oil in a braising pot or large oven proof saucepan. Add onion, green peppers and garlic. Sauté for 2 minutes. Add chicken and Italian seasoning. Sauté for an additional 3 to 5 minutes or until chicken is lightly browned. Stir in diced tomatoes and sauce. Stir all ingredients to evenly distribute. Cover pan with foil. Place in preheated 325-degree oven. Bake for 30 minutes, or until the internal temperature is at least 165 degrees. Remove from oven and stir in parsley. Salt and pepper to taste. Serve with your choice of cooked pasta.

StoneRidge Living

440 East Lincoln Avenue

Myerstown, PA 17067

StoneRidgeLiving@StoneRidgeRetirement.com

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StoneRidge Retirement Living is the parent company of four retirement communities in South-Central Pennsylvania. These communities include StoneRidge Towne Centre (717.866.6541) and StoneRidge Poplar Run (717.866.3200), both in Myerstown, Church of God Home in Carlisle (717.249.5322) and Schoolyard Square in Pine Grove (570.345.4075). Visit us online at www.StoneRidgeRetirement.com.



StoneRidge Donates Computers to Kenyan Orphanages

StoneRidge Poplar Run and Towne Centre retirement communities have donated several desktop computers which will be used in Kenya. Reverend Gabriel Kioi, a native Kenyan who serves as a chaplain at Towne Centre and pastor of The Lord's Family Fellowship of Harrisburg, will head the mission to raise the necessary funds to ship the computers to the East African nation. Specifically, they will be used at orphanages and church organizations to help improve the quality of life for the people there. Reverend Kioi explained that he will personally raise the funds needed to provide for upgrades to the computers and to cover the shipping costs. At this point, he is uncertain as to when they will be shipped, but is hopeful to complete this mission within the next few months. Anyone interested in donating towards the upgrades and shipping costs may contact Reverend Kioi at 508.981.6703.