



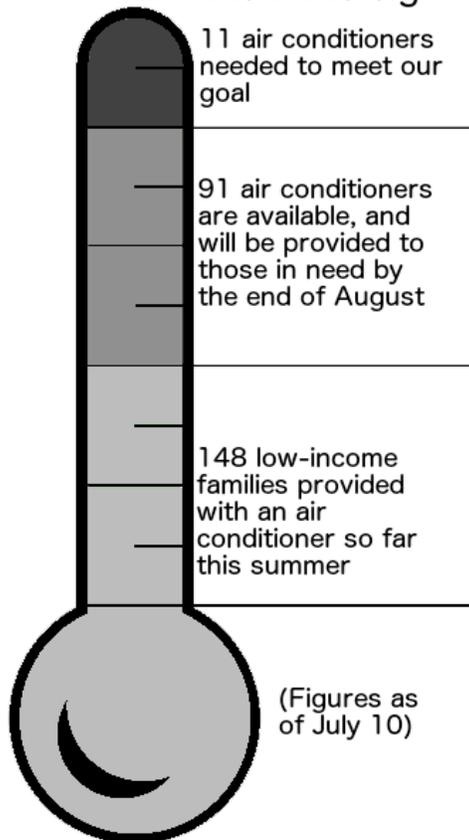
THE CONNECTION

www.energycare.org • (314) 773-5900

Founded by Sister Patricia Ann Kelley, CCVI

A MILD SUMMER STILL PRESENTS CHALLENGES TO THE POOR

Goal: 250 families provided with air conditioning



With cold temperatures lasting through March and into April this year, EnergyCare's staff swung straight from our Winter Warming Program to preparing vulnerable people for the summer.

The summer started relatively mildly, although a heat index high of 107°F in June reminds us what 'mild' can mean here in St. Louis! At EnergyCare we are always delighted when the summer starts off cooler: any St. Louis summer will have days hot enough to threaten vulnerable people living without air conditioning, however a cooler June allows us extra time to get those at greatest risk properly prepared.

Every year, when planning for the summer there is one question that dominates: "Will there be enough AC units to help those in critical need?" Because of the generosity of our donors we were able to buy 150 units so far this summer. In addition, an extremely kind gift of 71 ACs from First Bank meant that we had a strong start.

At the time of writing (July 10th) your donations had allowed us to assist 626 people so far this summer. This included making 308 home visits for things such as making energy assistance pledges, installing 148 air conditioners, and servicing 24 existing units. These are steps that make sure that, come a hot spell, there won't be an emergency. In fact, this protection lasts not just for this summer, but for up to 10 summers!

Thank you for making a difference in so many lives! Because of you we are within striking distance of reaching our goal of providing 250 families with air conditioning this summer. Of course 250 is not a magic number, but if we are able to help 250 families this summer, maybe we can help more next summer. And one day no vulnerable, low-income senior will be left at risk from the summer heat.

NEW PARTNERSHIP LEADS TO ENHANCED SERVICES

Many St. Louisans live in homes that they cannot keep warm in the winter because the building is in disrepair. EnergyCare's weatherization program, and the provision of space heaters and blankets, can save lives in a bitter St. Louis winter. However, for some low-income people living in dilapidated housing, it's just not enough; sometimes we put vinyl over windows that are old and rotting, or weatherstrip doors that simply need replacing. It makes a difference, but we want to do more. So last year we started looking to expand the our winter weatherization program to better address these more complex cases.

EnergyCare is excited to announce a new enhancement to our existing weatherization service that is designed to keep the people we serve warmer and could help reduce their utility bills.

Thanks to a new partnership with the Lutheran Foundation, we are providing more substantial work to help clients stay warm in winter. We are replacing broken windows, replacing a furnace that is beyond repair, or replacing damaged doors. This is an important priority because it can help more low-income elderly, chronically ill or disabled people maintain a safe temperature inside their home. Too many people in St. Louis struggle to stay warm in winter, and although EnergyCare is a small organization, we are striving to grow so that we can help more people and make energy poverty a thing of the past.

THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

Jeri is a real person who has received assistance from EnergyCare. She is representative of the many low-income elderly, disabled, ill or very young people EnergyCare helps year in and year out. The EnergyCare staff describes a visit with Jeri.

Like many of the people we serve, Jeri faces a lot of medical problems, from cancer to gout. She recently had several teeth removed, forcing her to eat only soft foods like pudding, into which she crushes the three antibiotics she is on.

Many of our low-income neighbors struggle to pay their bills. Jeri is no different. Rent alone takes 60% of her income, and then there are utility bills. Besides keeping her house cool enough to be safe, she also has to run her oxygen and nebulizer which add to her electric bill. Then comes the struggle to decide whether to tackle that bill

first, or pay another bill. *"My gas bill is almost \$600 - you rob Peter to pay Paul."*

Jeri also struggles to buy medical tape to secure her catheter, toiletries, prescription copays, and other items not covered by the small amount of food stamps she receives. *"People don't understand, that little small stuff, like toothpaste."*

Without money for even these simple necessities, Jeri certainly couldn't afford to buy a new air conditioner. When asked what it was like living without one, she said simply **"You can't breathe."** She suffers from bronchitis, asthma, and COPD.

"That's why I gotta sit up high. You gotta keep your lungs clear," she said from the hospital bed in her living room.

Jeri let us in on a fantasy: *"I wanna be like normal people. I wanna go to work. I wanna get outta here and go volunteer."* Her biggest challenge now? *"Trying to survive on food, and my medicines."* The air conditioner that you provided through your generous gifts to EnergyCare have taken one more worry off Jeri's list. Staying safely cool in her own home is no longer her most pressing concern, and it helps her breathe a little easier, both literally and figuratively.

MSGR. TELTHORST REMEMBERS "A BOLD LADY"

Development Assistant, Justine, sat down with the pastor of Mary, Mother of the Church to talk about his history with EnergyCare.

Msgr. Telthorst served as chaplain to Sisters of the Incarnate Word in the Normandy, MO area. This is how he met Sr. Pat Kelley, who would later found EnergyCare. Msgr. Telthorst says Sr. Pat was *"a fun lady, a bold lady... you gotta be bold to do what she did."*

Not only is he a donor, Msgr. Telthorst has also been a volunteer. He remembers helping Sr. Pat by installing an air conditioner in a needy person's home one summer. The A/C was

going in *"an awful basement."*

Msgr. Telthorst seemed very grateful that he has never had to worry about living in those kinds of terrible conditions.

When asked why he continues to give to EnergyCare, so long after the death of his friend, he said, **"I can't stand the idea of people being too hot or too cold."** He is grateful that he has the security of a comfortable home, safely temperature controlled. *"I can't stand the thought that people can't have*

that in this country."

On Sr. Pat's life and death, Msgr. Telthorst said, **"She died doing what she loved best."** The board and staff at EnergyCare, and the people we serve, are truly grateful to Msgr. Telthorst for his years of support as we continue doing Sr. Pat's work.

To read more of Msgr. Telthorst's wonderful memories of Sr. Pat and EnergyCare, please visit our blog at www.energycare.org.

BECOME AN ENERGYCARE HERO!

By visiting www.energycare.org you can become a member of our elite group of generous, committed people called *the Guardian Circle*. Can't afford to make a \$100 gift to help provide a low-income senior with an air conditioner this summer? Sign up to make a monthly gift of just \$8.33 via your credit or debit card instead. Every gift, no matter how big or small, will help our vulnerable neighbors stay safely cool in their own homes this summer! (Your recurring online donation also helps reduce our fundraising costs, making your gift that much more impactful.)

THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

(Continued from page 2)



Right: Jeri's helper, Duke, jumps up for a kiss. "Medical dogs are really good. They can hear more than we can hear" says Jeri.

VIEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A recent Associated Press article cited US home electricity usage falling to levels not seen since 2001. According to the report more energy-efficient housing, appliances and electronic devices have contributed to the decline of electric use in the average American household for the third year in a row. The Department of Energy predicts residential energy use per customer to fall again by 1% in 2014.

I have a professional interest in energy conservation and I'm an electric utility customer. As a result, I found the article to be hopeful for the country and potentially beneficial to my budget. As the director of an energy/poverty organization, however, I'm yet to see the savings highlighted in the article being fully realized in the low income communities EnergyCare serves.

Finding financial assistance for delinquent electric bills remains a major burden for many families calling EnergyCare. Seventy five percent of the meager energy assistance funds we pledged in spring 2014 were paid to electric utility companies on behalf of low income older adults and families who daily struggle with energy affordability.

The article cited the adoption of tougher building codes that resulted in newer homes wasting less energy. Similarly, energy efficient retrofits to existing homes became more affordable as insulated windows and other energy saving materials dropped in price. Refrigerators, water heaters, washers & dryers and air conditioners have become more energy efficient. For example, the new GE 5,100 BTU one room air conditioners that EnergyCare provides to our medically needy neighbors have an estimated yearly energy cost of only \$47 according to the Energy Guide label affixed to every unit.

Unfortunately, the over 200,000 people residing in St. Louis County and City who live below the federal poverty level can't afford to purchase newer homes. Those with existing homes simply don't have the available funds to invest in energy efficient retrofits despite lower material costs. Similarly, purchasing a brand new energy efficient water heater is out of the question when you struggle everyday to just put food on the table, pay the rent and purchase much needed prescriptions.

The AP article gave me hope on several levels. However, a lot of work still needs to be done before the poor fully share in the savings that's currently being actualized by most average American households. With your continued concern and generosity we'll keep working to that end. Thank you.

NEWS AND NOTES

- We are delighted to welcome three new Service Providers to our team. They are Ashley, Amicia and David. They are already proving to be great assets to the team!
- A huge thank you to Ryan Moore and DeShawn Buggs, two former Service Providers who have moved on to new things! They were very well liked by staff and clients alike, and they will be sorely missed. Good luck, guys!
- June saw the inaugural meeting of the Young Friends of EnergyCare (YFEC). This is a group of young adults keen to play an active role in furthering EnergyCare's mission. For more information visit www.energycare.org...

- ...and if you do visit our website you may notice that it has been updated recently.

WORDS OF THANKS

- A big THANK YOU! to First Bank, who made a record donation of 71 air conditioners this summer - helping many, many people!
- We had a great response to our donor survey. **Thank you to everyone who participated.** We learned a lot of useful information that we hope to use to make our fundraising more efficient.

FACTS AND FIGURES

\$817 is the average monthly income of a senior living alone who receives help from EnergyCare.

96% is EnergyCare's success rate in helping low-income people stay warm last winter.

Since the last issue of **The Connection**, EnergyCare has received memorial and tribute gifts honoring the following:

MEMORIALS

Sister Pat Kelley, CCVI
Mary Ann Hess
Mitch Haas
Aloisia Bartolowits
Rosemary Meyer
Ben Lorenz
Echo and Austin
Robert Kaiser, Jr.
Mary Cusick
The Cusick Family
Paul and Helen Eckhard
Kathleen Finnegan
James J. Murphy
Gilbert A. Gennari
Humbert and Mary Ghio
Charles D. Goodhart
Marie A. Hilgeman
Rev. Edward J. Hilgeman
Patrick Leonard

Loretta Hoernschemeyer
Joan Costello Kemp
Stella and Edward Koziatek
Tom Lombardo
Lloyd E. Kuhnmuensch
Carl Steinbrueck
Raymond Bliss
Eveline Marie Niebruegge
Robert and Virginia May
Prof. Emeritus Robert Gerson
Clifford M. McNames
Tom and Betty Ann Clancy
Dr. Joseph and Mrs. Lucille
Siceluff
Philip J. and Hazel C. Merker
Hugo and Albertina Meyer
Leo and Ida Meyer
Alphonse and Henrietta
Molitor
Tom Mullen

Mary E. Murphy
Lucy
Don and Larry Ottersbach
Kelly Proskey
George C. Rankey, Jr.
John and Loretta Reilly
Mary and Ted Borowisk
Irene A. Schaan
Vinsel and Gladys Scrivner
Marian Loida
Micki Henson
Lee A. Tyson
Walter and Marie Falk
Joseph and Frances Laramie
Robert Shapiro
Carol Gund Wolken
Walter Wuertz
Vivian Zander
Cosimo R. Zuccherro
Judith's husband

HONORS

Judy Collum - "Happy
Mother's Day!"
Jack O'Leary - "healing"
The Birthday of Mary Ann
Hilgeman, CSJ
Justine Collum
"The hardworking EnergyCare
staff"
Julia Mager
Nicholas and Grace Petruzzelli
"Happy Mother's Day and
Father's Day!"
Dennis Kelley
Sue George
Carol Weisman "Happy
Mother's Day!"
Cardinal Raymond Burke -
"Always our Good Shepherd"



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Saving Lives By Degrees...

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