

# Collaboration among agencies highlighted at Interfaith Caregivers' gala

BY MARY STADNYK ■

Associate Editor

When organizations work together for the common good, it is about much more than just reaching a goal.

Collaboration “means advancing a shared moral vision,” said Daren Miller, executive director of Mount Carmel Guild, Trenton. “No single organization can meet every need, but together we can create a continuum of compassion that uplifts the whole person.”

Miller shared some thoughts when the Guild received a Shining Lights award Oct. 8 during the Interfaith Caregivers of Greater Mercer County's annual gala. The ICGMC honored Mount Carmel Guild and Incarnation-St. James Parish, Ewing.

Lauri Harbison, ICGMC's executive director, noted that her organization and Mount Carmel Guild have partnered in identifying needs, making referrals and providing care during the majority of ICGMC's 31-year history. The Guild also has supported ICGMC around the Thanksgiving holidays by providing food to be given to food-insecure people who receive care.

Harbison also said that for more than 10 years, Incarnation-St. James parishioners have volunteered with



Trinitarian Father Stan DeBoe, pastor of Incarnation-St. James Parish, Ewing, and the core of parishioners who volunteer with Interfaith Caregivers of Greater Mercer County, pose for a photo after receiving a Shining Lights Award at the gala. Courtesy photo

ICGMC's Neighbors Helping Neighbors program. They have assisted more than 175 care receivers with tasks such as transportation to medical appointments and helping with grocery shopping and respite care. She added that Incarnation-St. James parishioners have “provided more than 16,000 hours of care and compassion to our local community.”

“Mount Carmel Guild and Incarnation-St. James are two outstanding examples of working together to serve our local community better,” Harbison said. “Our collaboration with congregations and other agencies results in a pooling of strengths, dedication and resources that magnifies the benefit provided by any individual effort.”

Miller and Trinitarian Father Stan

DeBoe, pastor of Incarnation-St. James, said they were humbled by the ICGMC recognition.

“It reaffirmed that our quiet, behind-the-scenes work is part of a larger story of community resilience,” Miller said. “Mount Carmel Guild and Interfaith Caregivers represent the best of what happens when compassion is organized.”

“As we both look to the future, the Guild remains committed to building on this partnership to reach even more seniors, strengthen neighborhood networks, and continue showing that love of neighbor, when lived out in action, truly changes lives,” Miller said.

Father DeBoe reflected on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and how the Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to them “not only acts of charity but also as acts of justice, grounded in God's love for the poor.”

“The work of ICGMC embodies these lessons,” Father DeBoe said.

“It is the volunteers, our parishioners and all who serve with Interfaith Caregivers, who hear that cry and cross the borders of comfort to meet those needs. Sometimes they bring practical help. Sometimes they simply sit and listen. But in every case they bring the healing presence of Christ,” Father DeBoe said. “With every simple act of loving kindness, they help fulfill Jesus' desire to make all things new.”

Lauri Harbison, executive director of Interfaith Caregivers of Greater Mercer County, left, and Maureen Cozzi, chair of the agency's board, right, pose for a photo with Mount Carmel Guild's Mary Inkrot, former executive director, and Daren Miller, current executive director.

Courtesy photo

