



Centerburg Branch of Interchurch Social Services will hold a Celebration and Open House at their recently purchased new location at 56 Johnsville Road (Route 314) on April 27 from 2-4 p.m..

Centerburg Location of Interchurch Social Services To Hold Open House and Ribbon Cutting April 27

Interchurch Social Services of Knox County (ISS) is celebrating the acquisition of their new location in Centerburg on April 27 with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at 2:00 p.m. with shopping until 4:00 p.m. Other activities include Finger Foods, Scavenger Hunt and Raffles for all ages, according to Carolyn Feergus, ISS Executive Director. The public is invited to attend and tour the enlarged facility.

The ISS Board of Directors has been seeking a larger facility to serve the greater Centerburg community and the 5,500 square foot building at 56 Johnsville Road will greatly expand its Twice Teasured Thrift Shop and Pantry, according to Rev. Mearle Griffith, ISS Board Chair. Visitors to the Celebration and Open House can bring a donation for the food pantry and earn extra tickets for the raffle.

Interchurch Social Services has four locations in Knox County serving needy clients for more than 55 years, ISS began in Mount Vernon by seven congregations and

has grown to serve through four branch locations in Centerburg, Danville, Fredericktown and Mount Vernon with thrift stores and pantries in each location. Current Staff at Centerburg are Sheryl O'Neil, Branch Manager and Michelle Waspe, Pantry Manager. The Centerburg ISS is supported by more than 20 volunteers.



According to 2024 records, ISS provided services to 19,340 people in 7,948 families through pantry services. The Four pantries provide more than 272,449 family meals during the year.

The four locations of ISS had more than 2,195 hours of volunteer pantry service and received 19,235 pounds of donated goods in their pantries.

The four Thrift Stores served 16,166 customers and provided free clothes by voucher to 5,330 needy individuals. The thrift stores had 8,291 hours in volunteer services. Donated clothing and other goods totaled 16,593 bags.



Interior of the newly renovated Thrift Store in Centerburg ISS.



Branch offices were opened in Centerburg (1984), Fredericktown (1991), and Danville (1995). Each branch operates with a separate budget to meet the needs of their community and the surrounding local school district. Gloria Parsisson, a part-time social worker with ISS in the early 1980s, recalls the early discussion about the need for services to be offered closer to the clients. She remembers two women from Danville traveling to Mount Vernon to receive services and indicated that they had to rob their children's piggy bank to have gas money to make the trip. That experience made her and her staff colleagues realize that delivery of services near the client was vitally important.



Pantry Room of Newly Renovated Centerburg Interchurch.

Centerburg Branch History

The ISS branch in Centerburg developed slowly after Parsisson located an underused building owned by the local Jaycee organization at 40 North Clayton Street. She led an effort to distribute government commodities to area residents from that location each month, as the beginning services locally.

She remembers that Rev. Bob Adams of the Four Square Baptist Church had a pickup and volunteered to pick up commodities in Mount Vernon each month and deliver them to Centerburg for distribution.

After a while ISS was able to secure the services of a Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) worker and a food pantry was opened in the back of the building on a limited schedule, which has served continuously. When the Jaycees decided they no longer needed the building, ISS was able to secure it for their first branch. Parsisson remembers that the volunteers needed for the branch came from members of four local congregations--Centerburg United Methodist Church, Centerburg Lutheran Church, Centerburg Church of Christ and Four-Square Baptist Church.

An article in the November 8, 1984, issue of the Centerburg Gazette indicates an open house was held the previous weekend and the headline says, "ISS Ready to Serve." Rev. Mac Kelly, Centerburg United Methodist Church, and Gloria Parsisson, the part-time founding branch manager, are photographed with a new sign identifying the Centerburg ISS branch location. At their opening, they added a thrift store in the front of the building and Twice Treasured Thrift Shop has operated continuously ever since. Other services have included financial counseling and assistance, agency referrals and assistance as needed.