

Dear Friends of OGT Mid-Atlantic Branch,

Just before Christmas, we welcomed **Ralph Schmidt, Director of Donor Advising** flying in from OGT headquarters to assist and encourage us in raising funds for new warehouse space.



Bob Larson has been committed to the Octorara Area Food Cupboard for years. The immediate past president recently gave his notice; and Bob has been elected to replace him. Due to his new time commitments at Octorara, Bob has tendered his resignation as Assistant Branch Manager and Board Member at our Branch. He and Kathy will still be active volunteers with us.

On January 21 Rob Hall announced that **OGT is giving our branch a trailer** to facilitate our pickups of collections from various donor churches. What a blessing!

As we move strongly forward through this winter, we offer a **gentle reminder** to be sure the clothes you donate are **clean and ready to send**. Thank you for being part of our team!



Bob Larson presented **Certificates of Appreciation** to **Rector Tim Johns of the Episcopal Church of Advent** for their long-term association and support both financially and with clothing from their annual Stop Drop and Roll Event; **Gigi Mueller** presented one to **John Murray, the Lantana Square Acme Store Manager** for their donation of apple boxes every week for the last two years.



In 2025 **we gained 168 new volunteers** over 2024, a 14.4% increase. Those volunteers **packed 4,382 boxes**, an increase of 869 over 2024, a 24.7% increase. WOW! January was a very productive month with over 100 boxes packed in one week. The average packed box is about 35 pounds, so that's 3,500 pounds of packed clothing. If the Lord gives us that many vigorous hands on a regular basis, we'll top the 50 tons that were shipped last year!

We are actively **looking for an available warehouse**, hoping to move by September. We believe the Lord is encouraging us to stay **in southern Chester County** as about half of our volunteers come from that area. The other half come from far and wide but that area is central to them. The current space is 6,200 sq. ft. plus some shared access space. We are considering all options including renting, buying, building, or some combination. Based on current market rates, our monthly warehouse cost will go up, so we are looking for additional funding. If you know of resources that may be able to help with locations or funding, please contact Rob Hall, Branch Manager at 484-459-9217. Keep praying!

In 2025, 84 bikes were delivered. 19 to Ukraine, 6 to Mision Santa Maria in Avondale, 7 to STAR Foundation of Newark, 23 to Latvia, 8 to Hope on Deck in Newark and 21 to OGT-Maryland branch.



The container we shipped to **Latvia** on October 29 arrived December 15, in time for distribution prior to Christmas. The Latvia Red Cross immediately sent much needed winter clothing to the **night shelter, SC Gaizins**.

During November we were able to share some bars of soap, dishwashing soap and personal cleaning cloths with **Lincoln University students**, stretching their tight budgets. One example of the increasing ways we support the local community. Christian Life Center was heading up that drive.

To fend off the cold we sent 10 boxes of women's winter clothing and 9 boxes of men's winter clothing to the State Line Baptist Church's **outreach to the homeless, led by Ira Lentz**. A student from **Empower at Avon Grove HS** helps Ira load the boxes. Last year we donated 265 boxes of clothing to them as our primary outlet for **Domestic Clothing**. In January we send 9 boxes of men's coats, 9 boxes of women's coats and 1 box of hats, gloves, & scarves to the **Ruth Balick Distribution Center of the Ministry of Caring in Wilmington, DE**.



Supplies to the **Republic of Georgia** were received and distributed to our partner organization, Enguir1 in Orsantia. The director, Mrs. Iruza visited the village kindergarten and delivered humanitarian aid to the children, teachers and staff. They received clothing, handbags, toys and other essential items. The whole kindergarten was overjoyed by the gifts and the children especially loved the new toys.

John Hollinger continues to drop off more of his lovely jump ropes, and his wife **Grace** brings some of her handmade hats and blankets to share. We so appreciate their skills and generosity.



Our crew of 8 regulars was bolstered on January 10 by Jane's grandson and 2 friends, all 3 students of Salesianum, helping us pack a whopping 65 boxes that day. We are a great location for students needing to fill "service hours." Spread the word.

God's provision sometimes surprises us all! January 24 Bob Larsen found in a donated item, a wallet containing credit cards, cash and a driver's license. He contacted the owner who graciously donated the funds from the wallet to MAB! It had been missing for months! Imagine his relief from the fear of identity theft! **Check those pockets**, you too might find a gem!

Mary Lou McKee, Communications Manager, MAB