

## **“Compassion 2013” Charity Event In Norfolk To Help Hundreds Of Local Families With Free Groceries, Health Screenings And More**

NORFOLK, VA (May 1, 2013) – On Saturday, May 18 (9:00am-Noon), a charity event called “Compassion 2013: Satisfying the Hungry” will help hundreds of Norfolk families in need.

Presented by The Storehouse, a community food pantry run by The New Life Christian Center (3921 Pleasant Ave, Norfolk), and sponsored by Operation Blessing International and Bon Secours Virginia Health System, the event will provide free groceries to families in need, health screenings, cooking demos and more.

For the event, Virginia Beach-based humanitarian organization Operation Blessing International (OBI) will provide 10,000 pounds of groceries – enough to feed hundreds of families -- including canned vegetables, meats and sauces, cereal, granola bars, oatmeal, drinks and dried beans. OBI will also have its mobile kitchen onsite and will be providing meals and free cooking demonstrations to those in attendance.

Bon Secours Health System will also be onsite at The Storehouse, providing free healthcare screenings including blood pressure, body mass index, body fat, waist circumference for adults and pulse, respiration, blood pressure, height and weight for children.

“Compassion 2013” will mark roughly three years since Operation Blessing International and the Bon Secours Virginia Health System collaborated to revitalize, rebuild and expand the Storehouse after it was severely damaged by a 2009 Nor’easter. Following the storm, Operation Blessing International and the Bon Secours Healthy Communities Initiative led the construction effort and coordinated volunteer management to expand the structure from 600 square feet to over 1,000 square feet, and also installed a renovated kitchen, a new deck and a renovated playground. In addition to construction and volunteer management, OBI supported the effort by filling the pantry with more than 40,000 lbs of food, providing a \$10,000 donation, and adding The Storehouse to Operation Blessing International’s Hunger Strike Force to receive ongoing deliveries.

The East Ocean View section of Norfolk was selected to be the first community in which Bon Secours would establish the Bon Secours Healthy Communities Initiative. The primary goal of the outreach effort is to work alongside leaders to improve the overall health of the community.

“At Bon Secours our mission is to bring good help to those in need. We know that good help extends much further than providing access to exceptional health care,” said Michael K. Kerner, CEO, Bon Secours Hampton Roads Health System. “Good help also means working alongside others to impact positive changes and improve the overall health of our community. Our partnership with organizations like Operation Blessing, New Life Christian Center, Ocean View Medical and Dental Center, and others in the East Ocean View community is an excellent example of how focused collaboration can make a positive impact for those we serve.”

Bon Secours Healthy Communities has also helped to make many positive changes like the Storehouse program, the development of a community garden to encourage healthy nutrition, neighborhood beautification projects and supporting local sports activities for local youth.

The Storehouse is one of Operation Blessing's many efforts to help feed the local and regional community. Since March 2012, the charity has provided more than 1 million pounds of food and relief aid to 35 ministry partners helping Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Hampton and Newport News; the 7 cities that make up Hampton Roads VA. In addition, Operation Blessing also distributed more than 2 million additional pounds of food and relief aid to ministry partners throughout the rest of the state of Virginia during this same time period.

"Operation Blessing helps people in more than 20 countries each year, but we also help tens of thousands of people in our own hometown of Virginia Beach," said Bill Horan, president of Operation Blessing International. "The Storehouse has been one such story, and a huge help in easing the burden of providing food for many local families."

#### ABOUT OPERATION BLESSING INTERNATIONAL:

Operation Blessing International (OBI) is one of the largest charities in America, providing strategic disaster relief, medical aid, hunger relief, clean water and community development in 23 countries around the world on a daily basis. Currently, Forbes ranks OBI as one of its "100 Largest Charities" with an efficiency rating of 99%, and Consumers Digest also named OBI as one of "America's Top Charities" in 2012. Founded in 1978, Operation Blessing International has touched the lives of more than 255 million people in more than 105 countries and 50 states, providing goods and services valued at over \$3.3 billion to date.

To see an electronic press kit of OBI's work please visit: <https://vimeo.com/571543744>  
For more information on OB, please visit: [www.ob.org](http://www.ob.org)

#### About Bon Secours Virginia Health System

Bon Secours Virginia Health System (BSV), the fourth-largest and only faith-based health system in Virginia, is comprised of Bon Secours Richmond and Bon Secours Hampton Roads. BSV includes seven award-winning hospitals: four in Richmond and three in Hampton Roads. Bon Secours brings together an expanding network of hospitals, primary care practices, ambulatory care sites and continuing care facilities to provide high-quality health care and wellness services to thousands of Virginians. The not-for-profit Catholic health system employs nearly 12,000 people. Bon Secours Virginia hospitals offer a full range of services, including cardiac, women's, children's, orthopaedics, emergency services, oncology, neurosciences and surgery.

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