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“Erie City Mission Partners with Baptist Resource Network to Welcome 200-Plus Volunteers for Community Projects in the Erie Region.”

**September 21, 2024 - Erie, Pa** - The Erie City Mission, in partnership with the Baptist Resource Network (BRN) of Pennsylvania and South Jersey, will welcome more than 200 volunteers to its campus as part of their SERVE ERIE Tour. On Saturday, September 21, volunteers will participate in several ministry projects to renovate, repair, and clean the Erie City Mission campus and the surrounding neighborhoods.

“Our goal is to mobilize the church around the mission that Jesus gave us, when he commanded us to go into the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ,” shares Buff McNickle, BRN compassion ministries director. “We do this best when we are able to share and show God’s love through various acts of compassion in our communities.”

Three projects will focus specifically on service to residents within the neighborhoods surrounding the Erie City Mission—neighborhood clean-up, homeless encampment outreach and clean-up, and a community fair.

Over the last nine months the Erie City Mission has ramped up its outreach to those unhoused in our community living in unhealthy and dangerous conditions. This clean-up is long overdue. Rob O’Connell, chaplain for the Erie City Mission and the head of the organization’s Street Outreach Team, will oversee the clean-up of the abandoned homeless encampment, located South of 12th Street, between Liberty and Poplar Streets, directly behind Erie Tool Works. In an effort to prevent future habitation in a location that is unsuitable for living, volunteers will work to restore this area through the dismantling of makeshift structures and the removal of trash, furniture, and other debris.

“It is encouraging to us, as well as our community, that hundreds of people are willing to step out of the church and serve a community that isn’t even their own,” explains O’Connell. “This is a daunting task, and while this project won’t be completed in one day, with the help of these volunteers we are able to begin the process.”

The SERVE ERIE Tour will also include the Harvest Celebration, a community fair, to be held at the Erie City Mission on 11th Street, between French and Holland Streets. This community event will offer food, music, family-friendly games and activities, and access to valuable community resources. More than 20 organizations will join the Mission during this event to provide flu shots, haircuts, showers for men and women, winter clothing, and more, all in support of the Erie community and those the Erie City Mission serves. The Harvest Celebration is free and open to the public, and will take place from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

“The Erie City Mission has been a community focused organization for over 100 years,” says Brian Johansson, chief executive officer for the Erie City Mission. “I’m excited to see over 200 volunteers descend on downtown Erie in a coordinated effort to be a good neighbor. Many thanks to BRN.”

**About the Erie City Mission:** As a leader in the field of rescue and recovery, the Erie City Mission exists to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of men, women, and youth in the city of Erie. The Mission is committed to helping those impacted by the effects of addiction, poverty, hunger, and homelessness through a Christ-centered approach and programs that effectively meet an individual's long-term challenges. The Mission operates almost entirely from donated food, materials, and generous contributions from individuals, churches, and organizations. Established in 1911, the Erie City Mission is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

**About SERVE ERIE:** SERVE ERIE is led by cooperating BRN churches in the region as well as other cooperating partners across the state and region. The focus of this initiative is to inspire others to engage in compassion ministry by providing opportunities to churches and volunteers to participate in ministry projects in the Erie region. The goal for the BRN and these churches is to be the vehicle by which the love of Christ is both seen and felt as they serve the city.

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