

## Phil Cochran — A Friend of AMIB, Now and Always . . .

**P**hil Cochran has been a friend of AMIB since it was founded. In fact, he and his late wife Tessie were friends of AMIB before it was founded.

In 1939, Phil was member of the Hudson County Traffic Club, whose motto read: "No man stands so straight as he who stoops to help a child." Adhering to its motto, the club supported St. Joseph's School for the Blind in Jersey City, which provided elementary and secondary schooling for blind children. The club adopted St. Joseph's as its charity at Christmas time.

In 1968 AMIB was founded, and property in Barnegat was rented and became the first residence. Later the residences in Bayville and Toms



**Above: Phil Cochran reminisces through his scrapbook of memories and fundraising activities for AMIB.**



**Above, Phil is pictured with residents Mel and Bill at the annual picnic held on August 1, 1994. The picnic for AMIB residents, family and friends is a tradition begun by Phil and Tessie Cochran many years ago.**

River were opened. Many of the children who attended St. Joseph's came to AMIB. Many are now living at the Bayville and Toms River facilities.

Phil Cochran, too, has remained a friend through the years. He was the original fundraising chairman. With his friends Tom Gartley and Phil Caputo, he ran some outstanding fundraisers. They included spaghetti dinners, celebrity auctions, Chinese auctions and card parties.

Phil and his wife also started the famous annual Christmas party for residents which Santa Cochran continues to host to this day. The couple also initiated an annual picnic for residents, their families and friends.

Over the years Phil and Tessie encouraged fundraising help from

other volunteers. Among them were the Knights of Columbus, the Masons, firehouses and the Elks Club. Elks volunteers helped Phil convert a two-car garage into an exercise room for AMIB residents and build a porch at one of the group homes. Phil was named "Elk of the Year" for his work for the handicapped.

When Tessie passed away in 1983, the "Tessie Cochran Memorial Fund" was established to continue to fund the annual Christmas party and picnic.

Phil has also provided a bequest in his will to assure continued comforts for AMIB residents. He says it gives him pleasure to help others and to know that long after he's gone, he will continue to do so.