



*The Father McKenna*

C E N T E R I N C



MEETING NEEDS . . . RECLAIMING LIVES

## *Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference*

December 2016 Issue

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202-842-1112  
[www.fathermckennacenter.org](http://www.fathermckennacenter.org)  
CFC Charity # 32524

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Center on Facebook!



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### **Board of Directors**

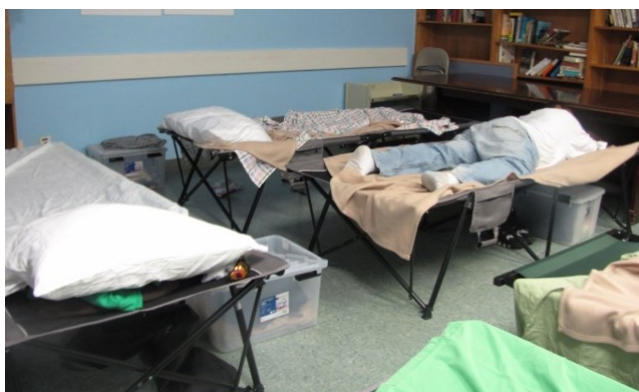
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President

## **Hypothermia Program**

*Helping Men Take the Right Next Step to End Homelessness*

For the past eight winters the Father McKenna Center has provided a small group of men struggling with homelessness a special opportunity to work to end their experience of homelessness.

The Hypothermia Program accepts up to 20 men who have applied for the program because they want to work toward employment, a permanent place to live or other significant step toward a stable, productive and meaningful life.



The program opens on November 1 and runs through March 31. The focus of the program is on each man making progress toward a goal that he develops in partnership with the Case Management team.

Each evening the men have an opportunity for a shower and a great meal prepared and served by Gonzaga families. Every week each man must meet with the Case Manager at least once to report progress and to receive guidance on next steps in his process. Each Wednesday evening Cortez McDaniel, Director of Services facilitates a support group meeting that is vital to the progress the men make.

Over the past several years 70-75% of the men who participate have achieved one or more of the goals they set. They have found employment, a place to live, reconnected with their family or possibly chosen to enter a rehab program.

The reason the program has such high success is because of its small size and the supportive atmosphere Cortez creates for the men.

## **How You Can Help the Hypothermia Program**

The Hypothermia Program budget is just over \$50,000 for the winter (or \$350 per night).

Your gift of \$350 will cover the cost of one night for up to 20 men as they work to move out of homelessness and to reclaim their stable and productive lives. A gift of \$35.00 will support two men for a night and a gift of \$175 will help us by supporting ten men for one night in our Hypothermia Program

Can we count on your help?

# Meet the Staff of the Father McKenna Center

The Father McKenna Center has a small, but very dedicated staff.

**Dr. Kim Cox, President** - Kim has been at the Center just over two years and is charged with quality leadership of programs and with working with the Board of Directors to ensure the long-term success of the Center.



**Cortez McDaniel, Director of Services** - Cortez is the lead person working with each guest of the Center to ensure that they are achieving their goals. Cortez has been at the Center since 2009.



**Ned Hogan, Director of Development** - Ned is completing his third year at the Center, and is responsible for fundraising, communications and volunteer coordination.



**Curtis Morton, Assistant Case Manager and Hypothermia Coordinator** - Curtis is the newest employee of the Center. He runs the Hypothermia Program on a day-to-day basis and assists Cortez with Case Management.

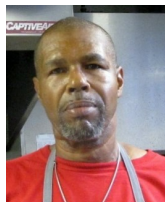


**Syd Slocum, Staff Assistant** - Syd works with Cortez to meet the needs of those we serve and supports the Center as coordinator of supply acquisitions.



sitions.

**Greg Perkins, Kitchen Manager** - Greg started full-time at the Center this past summer. He has improved the quality of the food and made a real difference with imaginative menus and recipes.



In addition to these employees, the Center is served daily

by **Sam Hamilton, a Jesuit Volunteer, and Ali Sentmanat, from the Franciscan Mission Service team.** Sam coordinates the Food Pantry and Ali leads the clothing closet team and the mail distribution program.



"Our team is family, and as a family we work together to serve those who rely on us every day. I know I can count on our team to look for the right opportunities to help the men in our Day Program and families in our Food Pantry. My colleagues give of themselves for the good of those we serve. They are truly disciples of Fr. Horace McKenna!!" reflected Dr. Cox.

## Father McKenna Center Wish List

The Father McKenna Center relies on the generous support of the community to provide our services to the homeless and very low income families who seek our assistance. Below is a partial list of items you can donate to assist us. For more information, please visit our website:

[www.fathermckennacenter.org](http://www.fathermckennacenter.org)

### Food Items

Canned Soups  
Canned Baked Beans  
Cereal    Rice    Pasta  
Canned Tuna and Chicken  
Maple Syrup (in 16 oz size or smaller)  
Peanut Butter / Jelly  
(in plastic containers)

To make a donation, please call FMC (202-842-1112) to alert us that you are coming. We will assist you to bring your contribution into the Center.

### Clothing

Our need is for men's casual clothing.

With cooler weather upon us, we need:

- Casual slacks & jeans
- Sweatshirts / Sweaters
- Winter Coats
- Underwear (new, please)
- Socks (particularly white)
- Shoes    • Shirts

If you have suits and sports coats to donate, please call Strive DC at 202-484-1264

## FEBRUARY 19 2017

SUNDAY 4 PM

10<sup>th</sup> Annual

## jigs reels songs

for the Homeless

**SHEEHY THEATER AT  
GONZAGA COLLEGE  
HIGH SCHOOL**

PARKING AVAILABLE IN THE  
GONZAGA PARKING GARAGE  
(ENTER FROM 1ST AND EYE STS NW)

**ADMISSION IS FREE**

Free Will Offering to Support  
the Father McKenna Center

[fathermckennacenter.org](http://fathermckennacenter.org)
 FatherMcKennaCenter



## Volunteer Spotlight *Jim Joyce, Concierge Extraordinaire*

Recently, Gerry Nolan, the Board Chair at the Father McKenna Center commented, "One of the ways I know that the Center is doing a good job is how many volunteers we have, and how much they enjoy being a part of the Center."

Jim Joyce is a perfect example of this. Jim comes to us as part of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps ([IVCUSA.org](http://IVCUSA.org)). He comes to the Center on Monday and Friday to support our work. He claims to be "America's oldest postman" as he distributes mail to our guests and he really enjoys supporting the Food Pantry.

Jim spent a lifetime in Western Pennsylvania, but after several years as a widower, his daughter Amy, who is an editor for the *Washington Post*, encouraged him to move to DC, so he could enjoy his two grandsons.

Jim is a "concierge" at the Franciscan Monastery one day each week ("I have secretly wanted to tell people where to go all my life!"), but he seems to make more and more time for the Father McKenna Center. He's willing to fill in on other days, when we need him!

"The staff at FMC are an inspiration to me. Their love and care for the guests of the Center is truly wonderful."

*Jim, the Father McKenna Center is blessed that you have been with us for more than a year, and we hope you will continue to grace us in the future!*



## Guest Spotlight **Thomas Simmons**

"Thomas has always been attentive to the pyramid and how it might help him improve his life," Cortez McDaniel recently said of Thomas Simmons, a guest of the Center over the past three years.

Thomas grew up in DC and after high school found a job that led him into the security industry. Unfortunately, he also fell in with "the wrong crowd" and was convicted of dealing drugs. After serving his prison sentence, Thomas was unable to go back to his security job. He found a job in a "half-way house" and developed a relationship with a woman with whom Thomas had a son. In 2013 both the job and the relationship came to an end, and Thomas found himself unemployed and homeless.

"I first came to the Father McKenna Center because it was a warm place on a cold day. Over time I listened to Cortez and realized that his fairness and his integrity make him speak reality to me and to all the men here at the Center."

Earlier in 2016 Thomas moved to North Carolina to care for an aging mother, and returned to DC because he thought he had an opportunity. He was duped, and now must rebuild a little here so he can do what he knows is right - return to North Carolina and care for his mother and rebuild his life there.

"Cortez has been my example and in some ways is my hero. Now I must be true to myself."

*Thomas requested that no picture accompany this article.*

## Food Pantry Provides 240 Thanksgiving Dinners

One of the highlights of each fall is the annual Thanksgiving Dinner Basket program that distributes to more than 200 families a turkey and the "fixins" for a Thanksgiving feast.

During October more than 230 families signed up for a turkey, and on the Monday before Thanksgiving members of our Board of Directors and other volunteers come to the Center to assist us to hand out the dinner baskets.

It is "organized" chaos! Each family receives a "ticket" for their turkey and redeems the ticket for a 10-14 lb turkey and a bag that includes stuffing, instant mashed potatoes, yams, green beans, cranberry sauce and a dessert.

The turkeys and food are donated by five main groups: Holy Trinity Parish, St. Bernadette School, Connelly School of the Holy Child, WC Smith Co. and St. Francis de Sales Parish Holy Name Society. Thank you to all who helped make this a huge success!!



*From the desk of*

## ***Kimberly Cox, FMC President***

### **Tidings of Comfort and Joy...**



We are now in the midst of my favorite season, Advent. I love the colors of Advent: purple and pink in the candles and vestments, evergreen in the wreath, and of course, candlelight. Advent is a season of expectation and preparation, hope and patience, the quiet stillness of the winter evenings - all leading to Joy at Christ's birth and his life among us.

On the first Sunday of Advent I spent part of the evening with the men in our Hypothermia Program. It was my great privilege to lead the prayer service that night. Naturally, I brought an Advent Wreath with me. We talked about the symbols of the Advent Wreath: a circle for God's unending love, evergreen for hope and life, the light for Christ among us, three purple candles for peace, hope and love, and a pink candle for joy.

After breaking open the scripture (Colossians 3:12-15), we lit the first candle for peace and shared with one another where we were seeking peace in our lives. Fred is hoping for peace in the world, Edward is looking for peace in his mind, and Danny is seeking peace among his family members. The men next shared what they are grateful for. I was truly moved by the depth of feeling and gratitude to God that these men expressed. Tony is grateful for his health; Monty is grateful for his family; Andrew and a number of others are grateful for The Father McKenna Center, the staff and the positive words they hear. Martin is grateful that he does not have to carry his belongings with him all the time and people aren't staring at him now. Bennie and Eugene are grateful for a quiet and safe place to sleep at night.

As the men were sharing the things they were thankful for, it suddenly struck me that the five months of our Hypothermia Program are much like the four weeks of Advent. In both it is a time of expectation and preparation. We expect these men to be in a better place when they leave in the spring and they are actively preparing for that. Hope for a better life underlies the entire enterprise. Each man must be patient and work in a focused manner on his plan, following up carefully and steadily. When the men shared their gratitude, one of the items that came up so many times was their gratitude to be staying at FMC where it is peaceful at night and they don't have to worry about a bed and they can rest. Finally, the new life of Mary's newborn son, Jesus, is like the new and better life that we pray each man will have at the end of the season.

Why did I title this piece "Tidings of Comfort and Joy?" Because it is both comforting and joyful to know that lives are changing at The Father McKenna Center. I want to share these Tidings with YOU, dear friends, donors and volunteers. Take comfort in the fact that you are making a difference in someone's life. Experience the joy of seeing a person take the right step on the path to a better life.

## **Social Justice in Action - A Gonzaga**



Patrick Brockwell assists an FMC guest in the Computer Lab.

This fall, for the first time, Gonzaga offered a class entitled "Social Justice in Action," taught by Ms. Katie Murphy. The goal of the class is to engage students in direct service and to then reflect on that service in light of Catholic Social Teaching.

Each week the students spend a class period (when they would otherwise have a free period) working alongside the Center's staff and volunteers. Sometimes they work as the Computer Lab monitor, other times they assist in the Food Pantry or on meal service, or during our clothing distribution program. The young men get to interact with our guests, and then they are asked to reflect on that experience.

Ms. Murphy shared the following, "The men of the McKenna Center are the co-teachers of Social Justice in Action because they break open the minds and hearts of students to think and care deeply about social justice issues in a new way. Students have moved from talking about "those people" to knowing names. They no longer discuss facts and stats about poverty or homelessness or mass incarceration with detachment; rather, they connect social justice to real people. They have been convicted with a new conviction for justice through this experience at the McKenna Center."