



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R I N C



MEETING NEEDS . . . RECLAIMING LIVES

Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference

September 2017 Issue

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The Father McKenna
C E N T E R I N C

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FMC Food Pantry Reaching More Families Than Ever Before

Horace McKenna, SJ was often heard to say, “You can’t talk to a person about his or her soul if that person has no food.”

He was quick to help a mother who needed food for her family. And the Center has always operated a Food Pantry. For years people came to the Center and were given a “pre-prepared bag “of canned goods, but in 2013 the process changed. Families were invited to shop from among the food we were able to acquire from food drives or from the Capital Area Food Bank.



We have solid statistics going back a decade. Prior to 2012 the Center averaged 8-9 bags a day, five days a week. Since then the number has steadily risen to 14 per day in 2017. While that may not seem like a lot, we now serve 50% more families that we did just five years ago. Our impact has more than doubled, from \$8,000 worth of groceries each month to more than \$20,000 per month in 2017.

Our patrons shop for nonperishable goods (soups, beans, rice, pasta, canned vegetables and fruit, etc.) and receive 1/2 gallon of milk, a dozen eggs, fresh bread, the fresh produce (see page 3) and a package of frozen meat.

“I need a little help providing food at home, and the Father McKenna Center Food Pantry is that help! Thank you!” said Annie Williams, an 86 year young member of the pantry.

Please Join Us!

1st Annual FMC 5k Walk - September 30

- What:** A 5K walk to support the Father McKenna Center
- When:** Saturday, September 30 at 8:30 am
- Where:** Gonzaga College High School
Parking available in Gonzaga’s Parking structure
- Why:** To gather friends of the Center to raise funds for the Food Pantry and Hypothermia Program.
- Who:** All are welcome!
What you will receive - a T-shirt, breakfast after the walk, and a great feeling of having supported our work with some of the areas marginalized and needy.
- Come join us - Registration opens at 8:00 am!**
- To pre-register: visit www.fathermckennacenter.org**

Lost Boys: A Tale of Despair, Struggle and Hope

During the spring of 2017 Cortez McDaniel and Ali Sentmanat, a Franciscan Service volunteer who worked at the Center from August 2016 to July 2017, developed a one-act play that focused on the stories of a group of men who came to the Center, often in the depths of despair, but through their hard work and the encouragement and guidance of Cortez and the team at the Center they rebuilt their lives, and continue to move forward.



homelessness, Charles and Calvin were unavailable for the June show. Derek Farmer, PeShawn Hicks, and Syd Slocum were added to the cast to share their stories.

After seeing the show, William Lawler, a long-time supporter of the Center reflected, "This was truly a wonderful look into homelessness and the great work the Father McKenna

Center is doing, one man at a time. Although there were some common themes, such as faith and resilience, the human details of each story were different and intimately revealed the unique journey each man has taken. These stories are powerfully recognizable and relatable, even to those who have not experienced homelessness. These stories showed honesty, humor, strength, self-awareness and hope. This is why we need the Father McKenna Center. I hope more people can experience this show."

We are currently working on developing a traveling show - so if you know a group that might be open to being challenged to see homelessness differently, contact Ned Hogan at nhogan@fathermckennacenter.org.

Ali was a drama major at the University of Dallas, and she brought her experience and enthusiasm to this project. Cortez brought his personal style and vision for the men, and each of the men in the show shared the bad, the good and the struggles in between.

We heard about grief, anger, loneliness, addiction, mental illness and a lack of faith in oneself. But each man also had a dream for a better life, and so he came to the Center to help him rebuild. Each of the men shared how the Center offered them renewed energy to make their dream become reality.

The show premiered as a "thank you" to our volunteers, as part of our Volunteer Appreciation event in late April. The cast was Troy DeVane, Charles Eatmon, Calvin Guy, Aubrey Holmes, Cortez McDaniel and Leon Williams. It was so well received that we asked the cast to reprise the show for a gathering of donors in mid-June.

But as is the case with men who struggle with

Cafritz Foundation Challenge Results

In the June newsletter we announced that the Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation had made a grant to the Father McKenna Center, a part of which was a challenge match. We needed to raise \$10,000 from our regular donors to be able to access the support from the Foundation.

During June through August we received 89 gifts in response to the Challenge, that totaled \$12,395. In short, we met the Challenge, and we have received the \$10,000 from the Cafritz Foundation. To all who donated, we say, "THANK YOU!"

Father McKenna Center Wish List Preparing for Cooler Weather

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

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 coming soon, 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

Volunteer Spotlight

Austin Smith, New Jesuit Volunteer



“Before I begin a career I wanted to take a year to give back. My faith and my family training has taught me the value of caring for others. This is my chance to make a real difference.”

Austin Smith recently joined the Father McKenna Center team as a Jesuit Volunteer. He will be working with us on several projects, including the Food Pantry, the Computer Lab and the mail distribution program.

“We are a very small staff, so the addition of generous young people like Austin is a great gift to us. We will count on Austin to be flexible and willing to help wherever he may be needed,” commented Kim Cox.

Austin will live in a community with six other Jesuit Volunteers who are working at nonprofits across the city. The year is a time for them to grow spiritually and in experience of direct service to the poor and marginalized in society.

He shared, “The JV experience is a unique opportunity for me to give a year of service, something I may never again have the time or resources to do. I am excited to be here.”

Austin is a 2017 graduate of Bucknell University and he has a deferred offer of a position with PriceWaterhouseCoopers. He is originally from Hazlet Township in central New Jersey.

Guest Spotlight

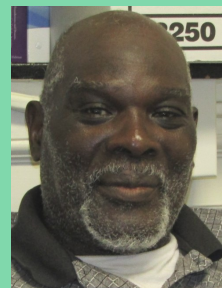
Calvin Guy

For many years Cortez McDaniel has been dedicated to helping those who struggle with homelessness to achieve a level of stability in their lives that allows them to get off the street. But he is especially dedicated to assisting those men who are senior citizens who end up being homeless.

Calvin Guy is such a man. He was married for more than 40 years to “the love of my life,” Margaret. When she succumbed to cancer two years ago “I just about gave up, I had nothing to live for.” Calvin sold his home and when his sons told him that he was not a part of their plans, Calvin became homeless.

One day last fall Calvin came upon Cortez outside of the Father McKenna Center, and Cortez invited him in. Calvin quickly was included in the Hypothermia Program, and Cortez began to look for an appropriate housing outcome for Calvin and another of the men in the Program. Before Cortez could place them, Calvin took ill. Cortez was able to place Calvin in Christ House, a facility that cares for homeless people with acute medical needs.

Today Calvin has completed rehabilitation from cardiac and diabetes issues and has a place of his own. “I owe everything to Cortez. He cared about me, and taught me to care about myself. Cortez saw something in me, and now I know what it must have felt like to know Horace McKenna!”



Farm Fresh Produce Makes a Difference

Through the generosity of many Father McKenna Center donors, the Center has been able to provide the men we serve each day, and the hundreds of families who rely on the Food Pantry with Farm Fresh Produce throughout the summer.

Each Thursday morning the McKenna Center van is filled with cases of produce from the Miller Farm in Clinton, MD. Zucchini, Summer Squash, Kale, Collard Greens, Cucumbers, Corn, Tomatoes, Eggplant, Cabbage and assorted other fresh produce have found their way onto the Father McKenna Center menu and into the Food Pantry.

“I really appreciate that the Father McKenna Center wants my family to have quality fresh food. We have enjoyed the produce and other foods that the Pantry makes available, and we know that they are healthy choices for us,” commented Karter Hill, a regular Pantry patron who travels from Southwest DC to the Center every two weeks to stock up on food for her grandchildren in her care.



From the desk of

Kimberly Cox, FMC President

“..to accompany and care for people....”

Over the last month I have had the great privilege of working in the Food Pantry every day, in the role of Food Pantry Coordinator during the transition between our Jesuit Volunteers. This time proved to be a wonderful reminder of the love and care that FMC staff and volunteers provide to the people with whom we journey on a daily basis.



This opportunity took me straight to the core of our mission: “...to accompany and care for people...” The care part is easy to see and define. FMC’s Food Pantry provides healthy options for families in our neighborhood who face hunger. Thanks to a special fundraising effort, we are able to offer farm fresh produce from Miller Farms. Beautiful tomatoes, corn, kale, string beans and even peaches, grace the tables of our Food Pantry patrons. Along with milk, eggs and fresh bread, we are making a difference.

Even more powerfully, I was able to participate in the accompaniment part of our mission. It was a joy to get to know our patrons better and to realize that we have become part of their lives. Ms. Clarice is always a delight to see. Her daughter, Fatima, was selected as a Gates Millennium scholar and graduated from an elite college in the Midwest. Fatima is now in graduate school at GW studying Public Health so that she can give back to her community.

Ms. Black was one of the first patrons that I met. Her triplets were almost a year old when I first came to FMC three years ago. She was so appreciative of the fresh milk that she could count on from us. The boys have now overcome their earlier developmental delays and are thriving. Now we are helping to keep them supplied with breakfast cereal. What a joy to have been part of their journey!

Our patrons share their sorrows with us as well. Mrs. Beadle came in last week and asked if she could shop a few days before her scheduled shopping day, because she had to attend her grandson’s funeral on her regular shopping day. While she and I were shopping in the soup aisle, she poured out her story about how her grandson who was killed by his mother’s boyfriend. In our Food Pantry we have created a place where Mrs. Beadle felt safe, someplace she knew she could find an open heart and comfort. I am so proud of the warm and caring environment that the staff and volunteers have created here.

This month has also caused me to reflect on how sharing a meal is central to the Christian faith. Jesus shared meals with so many people of differing status and circumstances. Each meal and each encounter was an opportunity for love and healing. FMC’s food pantry impacts over 40,000 meals in our community each year. It is my prayer that each of these meals is an opportunity for the love and healing that Christ invites us to enjoy.

“It Takes a Village. . .” - Volunteering at FMC

Each day women and men from all walks of life come to the Father McKenna Center to help serve the homeless and poor in our community. Daily those volunteers make a real difference and they know that they are appreciated by the men and families we serve, and by the staff they serve alongside.

We have more than 30 people whom come each week, some for an hour, others for an entire day. “My husband and I have been serving at FMC for four years. We continue to come because I simply fell in love with the FMC. I come to serve my friends - our guests - my extended family,” reflected Pat Kisicki who is part of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps. Scott Detrow, a staffer at NPR Radio, helps serve breakfast one day a week, and says, “I find the experience to be a great reality check for me, especially as against the issues I deal with at work each day. I look forward to it each week.”



You can join this illustrious crew, helping in the Food Pantry, the Clothing Closet or helping to serve a meal. Simply contact Ned Hogan at FMC (nhogan@fathermckennacenter.org or (202) 842-1112) to begin the conversation!