



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R • I N C

Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference

March 2018 Issue

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The Father McKenna

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A Gift of Time:

How Volunteering Makes a Real Difference

Each day at The Father McKenna Center seven members of our staff work to ensure that about 100 men currently experiencing homelessness and 15 - 20 families in need of supplemental groceries get the support they need to move forward in their lives.

Thankfully, we can count on teams of volunteers to help us carry out our work. We have more than 40 people who come to the Center each week to serve a meal or help the men acquire the clothing they need, to work in our Food Pantry or to work alongside our Kitchen Manager to prepare the "from scratch" meals we serve each day.



People like Jim Joyce, America's oldest "mailman" or Mike Rahill, our very own "shower boy." But it is also people like Katey Houck, a 3rd year GU Law student who comes each Thursday to serve breakfast to the men. Or Liza Ryner, a grand-niece of Horace McKenna, who helps out in the Food Pantry on Fridays. Some give a whole day, while others take time out of a busy day to serve a meal or help in some other way.

Katey Houck commented, "I love volunteering at The Father McKenna Center because it allows me to take time out from school to connect with

people in my community."

During 2017 more than 600 individuals offered at least one hour of service at The Father McKenna Center. Together they offered a total of 16,108 hours dedicated to the men and families we serve. That is nearly the equivalent of eight additional staff members!

You Too Can Volunteer with Us!

We always need more volunteers!

Individuals can offer 1 - 6 hours on one or two days a week (Mon-Fri). You can 1) Serve Breakfast 7:45-9:00 am; 2) Serve Midday Meal 11:45-12:30 pm; 3) Help in the Pantry 10:30-12 Noon; or 4) Help in the Clothes Closet 9:00-11:00 am (1st & 3rd Tuesdays).

Groups can help most any day in a variety of tasks. We also need groups of volunteers to serve on Saturday.

For more information contact Ned Hogan, here at the Center at (202) 842-1112 or nhogan@fathermckennacenter.org.

The Culture of Encounter - When Volunteer and Guest Become Connected in Special Ways

One of the most special aspects of The Father McKenna Center is the way that many of our volunteers create special relationships with the people we serve on a daily basis.

A great example of this occurs when families who serve the evening meal in the Hypothermia/Transition Program become connected to the men they meet while serving and eating dinner in The Father McKenna Center.

The Calvo family has been a regular part of the program, having served dinner several evenings this winter. The family consists of Paul and Helen, their sons Robert, Anthony (Gonzaga '20 and '22), 6th grader Vince and daughter Giovanna.

Kim Weston is one of the men in the Hypothermia/Transition Program. He was a very good basketball player as a youth and still plays regularly. Giovanna plays ball in a CYO league. Over dinner the two of them developed a bond, and Kim has made his way to several games to cheer Giovanna and her teammates.

Over the weekend of March 3 and 4 the Calvo family invited Kim to the end-of-season tournament. He spent the day with them and was so proud of Giovanna and her squad, as they won the tournament!

"This is a really great friendship for me. I have come to know and respect the family, and I feel that they genuinely care about me and my future. As I look ahead to having a new place to live in a few weeks the Calvo's have asked me to do some projects around their home. Isn't that what friends do? Help one another and support one another with their gifts and care!"



Kim Weston (center), with the Calvo's (l-r: Paul, Anthony, Helen and Giovanna) and the Championship trophies!

Helen Calvo shared, "Our family looks at Kim, and all of the men, as friends and look past any of the challenges they may be facing. It has been a blessing to all of us to serve the men there and get to know them on a personal level."

Father McKenna Center Wish List

The Father McKenna Center relies on the generous support of the community to provide our services to men who are 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 Baked Beans
- Pancake Syrup (in 16 oz size or smaller)
- 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 warmer weather coming soon, we need:

- Light jackets
- Casual Pants / Shoes
- Shorts and Socks

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

Save the Date

2nd Annual Walk for McKenna

Saturday, September 15, 2018

Gonzaga HS Campus

What: 5K walk to support The Father McKenna Center

When: Saturday, September 15 at 8:30 am

Where: Gonzaga College High School

Why: To gather friends of the Center to raise funds for the Food Pantry and Hypothermia Program.

Who: *All are welcome!*

Come join us - Registration opens at 8:00 am!

We hope to see you here on September 15!

Gonzaga Mothers Club & The Hypothermia Program

Each evening, from November 1 to March 31, a family from Gonzaga College High School, comes to The Father McKenna Center and serves a meal to the men in the Hypothermia/Transition Program.

But more than that, the family, after serving the men, serves their own plates and sits with the men for the meal.

Conversations range from sports and other day-to-day things to more about the journey a man has been on and how they will effect real change to rebuild their lives.

Each family who participates tells us that the experience was really transformative for their family and that the opportunity to serve made each member of their family grateful for the blessings they share and more willing to share with others their blessings!

The relationship between the Gonzaga Mothers Club and the Hypothermia Program is indeed very special.

Each year members of GMC come to the Center to share in the plan for the season, and to offer their help. The Mothers Club provides fresh pillows, blankets and bedding for the program each year, but the real gift is the time and love the families put into preparing and serving the meal each night.

Thank you, Gonzaga Mothers and their families!

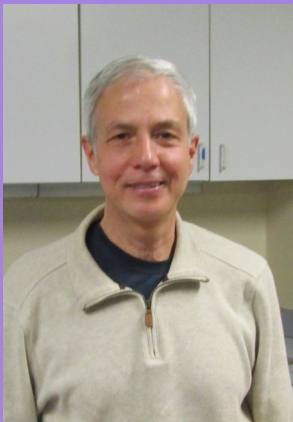


Volunteer Spotlight

Aldo Esposito

When you retire from a career as a cardiac specialist what do you do with your newly found “free-time?”

But of course, you volunteer at The Father McKenna Center!



At least that is part of the answer for Al Esposito. Al's two sons attended Gonzaga more than ten years ago, and Al and his wife, Sandi, have been donors to the Center for many years. So, he knew that the Center was here and was trying to meet the needs of the poor and marginalized. Last autumn he became one of our Food Pantry volunteer, coming each week on

Tuesday to help our Food Pantry Patrons shop for the goods they need in the “mini-grocery” that our Food Pantry has become.

“After nearly a year of retirement, I wanted to give back. I went to St. Joseph's Prep as a youth and I have always wanted to give of myself as the Jesuits taught me,” Al reflected. He continued, “I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and have been impressed by the dedication, kindness, and love that is exhibited by everyone here at The Father McKenna Center.”

Volunteer to Staff Spotlight

Stephanie Caban



“When I first came to The Father McKenna Center I was impressed with the care and commitment on the part of the people who volunteer and work here. So when my dreams of working as a lay missionary with the Franciscan Mission Service had to be put aside, I knew that The Father McKenna Center was someplace where I can make a difference.”

Stephanie Caban, a native of the Bronx, New York, joined the staff of The Father McKenna Center at the end of February. She is charged with coordinating, on a day-to-day basis, the Clothing Closet and the clothing distribution efforts of the Center. She will also be working as an assistant to Kim Cox.

Stephanie graduated from the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz in 2016. In August 2017 she was accepted as a lay missionary in training with the Franciscan Mission Service, and through out the fall of 2017 she would grace our kitchen on Wednesdays, baking cookies and other treats for the men.

“Being a part of The Father McKenna Center team is a wonderful opportunity for me. I am deeply committed to making a difference for others, and I see in Fr. McKenna an inspiration to serve and to give to others.”

From the desk of

Kimberly Cox, FMC President

Days are getting longer, the temperatures are getting warmer, our spirits are lifting – spring is on the way! I think we all look forward to spring each year, a season of renewal. It is also a time of preparation for Easter – the great celebration of God’s love and our redemption.

It is fitting that we take the month of April to honor and celebrate our volunteers. Volunteers are the heart and soul for so much of the good that happens in our country. In the early years of the United States, Alexis deToqueville observed, “The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens.”

We are blessed at The Father McKenna Center by many people who give of their time and talent to accompany and care for men who are homeless and people who face hunger every day. Volunteers are truly the hands and feet, hearts and smiles that make the Center a special place. Volunteers like Jim Joyce foster a culture of encounter at the Center. “My friends ask me why I come to the McKenna Center every week. I tell them that my friends are here. I have come to love these guys and I hope I am making an impact. I know that they have changed me.”



Last year more than 600 different people offered their time and talents here at the Center. Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes, from the 12 – year old twins that made pancakes on

Christmas morning, to my 82 - year old mother, who loves working in the kitchen and serving on the line at lunch. We are blessed by upwards of 40 volunteers who are scheduled weekly with direct responsibilities for serving at meals, helping in the kitchen, distributing clothing, shopping with patrons in the Food Pantry or answering phones.

The guests in our Day Program also appreciate the value that our volunteers bring. “They are all fantastic,” said Kim Weston. “They don’t have to do this, and they have our best interests at heart. They all genuinely care.”

As we look to April, let us all celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Month. Whether you are one of our devoted volunteers or are giving your time and talent to The Father McKenna Center, or to other important causes, you are making the world a better place.

A Special Thank You to the people who make The Father McKenna Center a place of caring and comfort for people in need. God Bless You,

Kim



Omega Psi Phi Honors Cortez McDaniel, Again!

On Saturday, April 14, 2018 at its annual District Meeting the 3rd District of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. (Virginia and Washington, DC) will honor Cortez McDaniel as its “Citizen of the Year.” This will mark the 2nd time Cortez has been honored for his deep commitment to those who are homeless and on the margins of society.



In November the DC Chapters of Omega Psi Phi, at their Annual Achievement Week Banquet, honored Cortez as Washington, D.C.’s Citizen of the Year. Walt Hill, a former Chapter President of the Alpha Omega Chapter of Omega Psi Phi, a Gonzaga grad (and Dad) and Father McKenna Center Board Member, reflected that the honor is because Cortez lives the Cardinal Principles of Omega (Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance and Uplift) and does so with great commitment to others.

Having been selected by the 3rd District, the nomination will be forwarded to Omega Psi Phi’s International Achievement Week Committee for review with other nominations from around the nation.

Cortez, while accepting the award last November, said, “I am humbled that men who I admire might call me ‘Citizen of the Year.’ When I was imprisoned I made myself and God a promise. ‘If I am ever released from prison, I will never commit another crime, and I will do all I can to make sure that others who are like me never fall into the traps I fell into.’ I hope my life has been faithful to my promise.”

Walt Hill recently said of Cortez, “Mr. McDaniel has been a man of his word and has spent the last ten years in service to men in need of a beacon of light. Mr. McDaniel has, and continues to be, that beacon of light. Omega is pleased and proud to honor a true ‘man for others!’”

The Father McKenna Center is truly blessed to have Cortez as part of our team. He epitomizes all the best of Rev. Horace McKenna, SJ.