



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R • I N C

Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference

September 2018 Issue

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CFC Charity # 32524

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The Father McKenna

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Journey to Restoration The Father McKenna Center Way!

On Thursday, June 28 The Father McKenna Center hosted an evening performance of *Journey to Restoration*, which is a one-act play that reveals the stories of four of the men who have accessed the services of the Center and have now found housing, jobs, education or all of these because of their work with Cortez McDaniel, the Director of Services at the Center.

Calvin Guy, Danny Dotson, Drew Gavins and Brian Graham shared their stories woven around a group of songs performed by Cortez.



"We are so proud of these men. The experience of retelling their stories was transformative for them, and provided all of us with a look into the challenges facing those who struggle with homelessness. It was a 'tour de force!' " commented Kim Cox, the President of the Father McKenna Center.

2nd Annual Walk for McKenna



Saturday, September 15, 2018
@ Gonzaga College High School
8:00 am Registration
8:30 am Step-off

Individual Registration: \$30.00

Walk in the footsteps of Rev. Horace McKenna and support the Father McKenna Center and our work with the poor and marginalized in our community.

To register, visit our new website: www.fathermckennacenter.org.

Gathering Food for 70,000 Meals! It Takes Some Work!

The “food chain” at the Father McKenna Center is long and involves loads of many suppliers and many hands to gather it all in.



The Capital Area Food Bank, Giant Foods (3rd & H St NE), Miller Farms, Restaurant Depot, Panera Bread (Dulany St in Alexandria), Great Harvest Bakery (Quaker Ln in

Alexandria), Alexandria Pastry Shop, Best Buns and Starbucks (at Bradlee Shopping Center) all donate or sell food to the Center on a weekly basis.

At right is the FMC van loaded at the Capital Area Food Bank. We pick-up a similar load each week! It takes a team of staff and our guests to unload the food and distribute it between the kitchen (where we prepare meals for the men experiencing homelessness) and the Food Pantry, where we distribute food to more than 250 families each month.



And then there are the food drives: Gonzaga, Georgetown Visitation, St. Peter's, Our Lady of Mercy School, Holy Trinity Parish and several other “ad hoc” food drives that provide soups and other hard to acquire items.

Last November the young men of Gonzaga collected more than 20,000 cans and packages of food for use in our Food Pantry. At right is the Upper Commons at Gonzaga with some of those 20,000 cans and packages of food.



Next time you go to the supermarket and purchase food for a week imagine having to provide enough food for 1,000 meals a week! That's a lot of food and it takes hard work to pull it all together each week for those who rely on The Father McKenna Center for a meal or for food to feed a family who is at risk of food shortage in our “land of plenty!”

We thank all of our donors and partners for making this possible!

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 Mix
- Cereal
- 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, we need:

- Sweatshirts / Sweaters
- Winter Coats
- Socks (particularly white)

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

Save the Date Lessons & Carols

Thursday, December 20, 2018

The Great Church of St. Aloysius

Join us for an evening of traditional Advent / Christmas readings and carols, featuring a choir of men from our Day Program, under the direction of Fr. Philip Ganir, SJ.

Parking will be available in the Gonzaga parking structure (enter from 1st and I Sts NW)

A light refreshment reception will follow in the Father McKenna Center.

FMC Has Two New Full Time Volunteers

Over the past three years the Father McKenna Center has been blessed to have a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) working with us and for two of those years we also have had a volunteer through the Franciscan Mission Service.

Meet our newest Jesuit Volunteer, Andrew Scarlott. Andrew graduated from Xavier University in May and joined us in mid-August. He will be with us through the end of July 2019.

And meet Nayeli Garcia, our new Franciscan Mission Service Volunteer. Nayeli is a 2018 graduate of Neumann University, and will also be with us through July 2019.



Each was asked to think about what they hope to learn through their experience with us, and Nayeli replied, "I have always volunteered in college settings. This will broaden my experience." Andrew added, "I have an interest in non-profit management. I hope to learn about that, and to grow from my work with the men experiencing homelessness."

The Center President, Kim Cox, commented, "we very much look forward to the contributions that

each of these energetic and enthusiastic young people can and will bring to us in the months ahead. We have been blessed with great volunteers in the past and we are confident that these two will carry on that tradition!"

Volunteer Spotlight

Louise and Bill Jones

Our featured volunteers this quarter call Houston, TX "home." But for the past several months they have offered a day of service in the Father McKenna Center each week.

Louise and Bill temporarily are living in DC to support their son and his children. Their daughter-in-law lost a valiant battle against cancer last fall. Louise and Bill moved to DC to be a part of the team that cared for the family through the struggle, and have stayed on to help with the transition to a "new life." Soon they will return to Houston, but they have made a lasting impression at the Center.

"We have really enjoyed our time volunteering at The Father McKenna Center. From the showers to the kitchen to the food pantry it has been a wonderful experience. The people we have met who work and volunteer at The Father McKenna Center are truly amazing. They are so committed to making a difference in people's lives. When we return home to Houston we want to find a place to volunteer that is just like the Father McKenna Center, but we know that will be impossible."



Guest Spotlight

Albion Hill

"I have struggled with drugs and alcohol for most of my adult life," reflected Albion Hill, a 55-year old man originally from the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

"I came to DC almost 25 years ago to work in the fish markets and my use of alcohol and later my drug use cost me jobs and I ended up homeless."

"I have been coming to The Father McKenna Center for several years. It is a place where I know I can count on being treated well and be offered a shower and a good meal. Over time I also learned that Cortez McDaniel really cared about me, and that he had real wisdom and guidance for me," he continued.

In the past Albion has worked in food service, as a cook. When his last job closed he fell back to drinking and drugging. Now he has been sober for almost a year and is now in a training program for building maintenance.



"The Father McKenna Center has been a rock for me over the past few years – I am very grateful they always welcomed me, and helped me as I have struggled, and now I feel that they have given me a base from which I can grow. I am currently in a program at S.O.M.E. that offers me transitional housing and employment training. I would not have found the program at S.O.M.E. without Cortez' support."

From the desk of

Kimberly Cox, FMC President

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much" - Helen Keller

For this issue I decided to frame my thoughts with quotes from two great women – Helen Keller and St. Teresa of Calcutta. They speak about the power and the grace of working together. The stories in this issue demonstrate that power and grace. When I think of the number of partners that we have who make our work possible, it is inspiring. So many people come together to accompany and care for men in our Day Program who are struggling with homelessness and families facing hunger who come to our Food Pantry.

I grew up in the Midwest near a small Amish farming community. It is from the Amish community that I first observed the power and grace of working together. If you have ever seen an Amish barn raising, you know what I am talking about. Everyone pitches in and everyone makes a difference, from the oldest to the youngest member of the community. In the course of a day an entire structure is created. Something lasting has been built that provides shelter and supports a family.

Here at The Father McKenna Center, we are not raising barns, but we are raising up men who live in the chaos of homelessness and families who don't have enough food. Each person who volunteers or works at the Center is part of this effort to raise up people in need. They bring working hands and loving hearts, providing the grace and human touch that can change lives. The men in our Day Program pitch in, too. As early as 7 am some of our guests will volunteer to help unload the van when we return from a shopping trip to Restaurant Depot on Mondays. And again at 10 am on Wednesdays when our Kitchen Manager and Food Pantry Coordinator return with 1,200 pounds of from the Capital Area Food Bank.

I want to offer a warm welcome to Andrew and Nayeli. In a few short days they have already had made their mark and lifted all of us. I am delighted that they have joined our team and appreciate their commitment to people in need.

In virtually the same breath I bid a fond farewell to Stephanie Caban and Margaret Atkinson. Margaret was the bridge between Coordinators in the Food Pantry. For three summers she has stepped in and kept the Pantry running smoothly for our patrons. Stephanie has brought joy to us each day. Whether working in the kitchen or keeping the Clothing Closet program running, her passion for service inspired all of us. She directed and co-produced "Journey to Restoration" – a play that touched so many hearts.

It is a blessing for me to be part of this work and I am deeply grateful to the staff, our volunteers and our donors who make something wonderful possible.

"None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful." - St. Teresa of Calcutta



Winter Coat Drive

Saturdays in October - Drive-up Service 10 am to 12 Noon on North Capitol St

Soon enough we will be bundling against the cold! And our men will need coats for the winter.

Last Spring most of us put our winter coats in a closet to wear again this winter, but men struggling with homelessness must carry everything with them, so last winter's coat was jettisoned when the warmer weather came in May.

In early November we will distribute coats to the men in the Day Program here at the Center. If you have a gently used men's winter coat that you no longer wear,

we would like to add it to our collection for the men.

The Father McKenna Center will have someone available to receive winter coats from 10 am to 12 Noon on each Saturday in October—all you have to do is drive up in front of the Center (900 North Capitol Street) and we will take your coat and offer you a receipt!

Please help us help those who rely on us!

