



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R I N C



MEETING NEEDS . . . RECLAIMING LIVES

# Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference

December 2018 Issue

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 CFC Charity # 32524

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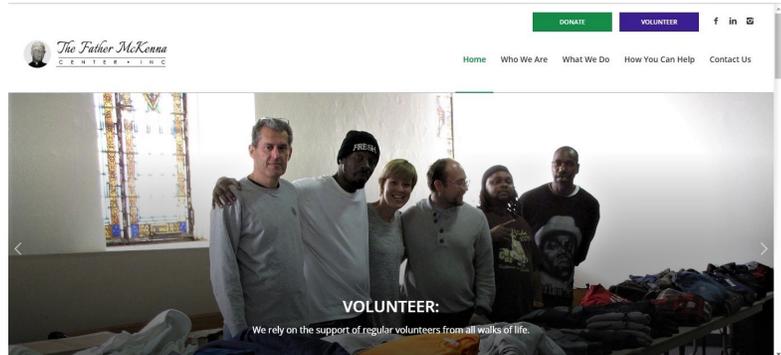
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## FMC in the Digital Age

Everyone knows how important it is to have a website. We are pleased to let our friends know that FMC has launched a new and improved website (pictured at the right)



([www.fathermckennacenter.org](http://www.fathermckennacenter.org)). In the 21st Century there is so much more to communicating through electronic media. Facebook, Linked In, Instagram and many other social media platforms are now available to help us stay in touch.

The Father McKenna Center is blessed with many wonderful donors and volunteers, but the reality is that the Center must work to attract new friends to support our mission. To accomplish that requires multiple approaches, and so, the Father McKenna Center has moved into the Digital Age!

For several years we have maintained a Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/FatherMcKennaCenter](http://www.facebook.com/FatherMcKennaCenter)), and recently we initiated an Instagram page ([www.instagram.com/thefathermckennacenter](http://www.instagram.com/thefathermckennacenter)) and created a profile on Linked In ([www.linkedin.com/company/father-mckenna-center-inc/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/father-mckenna-center-inc/)).

To make it easier to reach us on any of these platforms, we have included, as an insert to this newsletter, a page with the QR codes for the four pages. Please check in with us as we try to share the *good news* of the activities and events at the Center.

## A New Holiday Tradition

### Lessons & Carols

Thursday, December 20, 2018

7:00 PM

In St. Aloysius Church



Featuring a choir of men from the Father McKenna Center programs under the direction of Rev. Philip Ganir, SJ

A Reception will follow in  
 The Father McKenna Center.

# Annual Hypothermia/Transition Program Launched



their goals for the program. This record is a testament to the dedication and hard work of Cortez McDaniel and his staffing teams that work with the men each winter.

This year's team (under Cortez' leadership) is Danny Dotson, a "graduate" of last year's program, along with Andrew Gavins and Darnell Harvey, men who have proven their readiness to assist this year's group to move along the Better Life Pyramid - the basis of our programs to assist men end their homelessness.

Each night the program moves the men closer to being in a place of their own and achieving their goals for a better life.

Each year The Father McKenna Center extends to 18-20 men the opportunity to stay at the Center overnight during the colder months. Typically the program runs from November 1 to March 31, but this year, due to the planned renovations, we initiated the program a couple of weeks early, on October 17.

The program opens every evening at 5:45 pm, with the men being encouraged to take a daily shower. They then move to a great meal provided by Gonzaga families. The families typically prepare the meal at home and then come to the Center to serve the men. The family then joins the men for their dinner.

After dinner the men have chores or meetings and end the night with a little television. Lights are out at 10:30 pm and they are awakened at 5:00 am.

For the past several years 75% of the men in the program have successfully achieved one or more of



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

### Food Items

- Canned Baked Beans (18 oz. or smaller)
- Maple Syrup (in 16 oz. size or smaller)
- Canned Chicken or Tuna (12 oz 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 cooler weather upon us, 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**  
**Jigs & Reels**  
**Sunday, February 25, 4:00 PM**  
**Sheehy Theater @ Gonzaga**



**Admission is free.**  
 (Free will offerings to support the work of the Center are appreciated.)

**We will have an Intermission Reception in the Upper Commons at Gonzaga.**

## Volunteer Spotlight Wednesday's A Team!



We all know a unique group of people who are “the secret sauce” for a program. One of those special groups at The Father McKenna Center is the four people who make up the Wednesday Breakfast Service team!

Tim Monahan, an attorney with Lockton, a commercial insurance broker; Joe Rippin, an attorney with a data analytics company; Laura Peralta-Schulte, a Senior Government Relations Advocate at NETWORK Lobby for Social Justice; and Scott Detrow, a congressional reporter with NPR, come to the Center each week to serve the men.

Scott reflected, for the group, “It’s been so great to get to know everyone else, and I always look forward to being with them. We have figured out how to work together well and shift to whatever’s needed.”

Laura added, “I’ve learned so much from the men we serve. Their stories, their courage in the face of challenge, their warmth are amazing and inspire me.”

## Guest & Staff Spotlight Darnell Harvey

“Drugs were a challenge for me throughout my younger days,” Darnell Harvey related. “For a time I was a functioning addict, but later on the drugs got the better of me. They ruined my life, and I was homeless for seven years.”

Darnell is a DC native who was for many years an ironworker. “I always had a job, I had my own place to live, even to sharing a townhouse with my fiancé and being in a ‘two-car family’. But drugs destroyed that for me.”

“I’ve known Cortez McDaniel for many years, and he has been a mentor to me. His life experience, his path, are a shining example to me and to others of the kind of person I want to be. I came to the Father McKenna Center because of the food and clothing, but I learned that Cortez had a great vision for me.”

“With Cortez’s guidance, and the support of family and friends, I have rebuilt my life. For the past three years I have been working to build my sobriety and now I am really honored to be asked to be a part of the Father McKenna Center staff.”

*Darnell is now on our team as an overnight monitor in the Hypothermia / Transition Program.*



## Gonzaga & Visitation Canned Food Drives

One of the most important aspects of Catholic education is to teach young people that they share in Jesus’s call to “serve one another as I have served you”.

One way that two partner schools (Gonzaga and Georgetown Visitation) live out this call is to host “canned food drives” to benefit the poor. The Father McKenna Center is the recipient of the Gonzaga drive and one of about 15 organizations that are recipients of Visitation’s drive.

This year the “men of Gonzaga” collected 12,600+



cans and boxes of food that were delivered to the Center on November 2. And on November 8 the Center received more than 2,000 additional cans from the Visitation drive.

These canned goods will serve the Center for the weeks and months ahead. We ask the students to focus on soups, baked beans and other items we are often not able to acquire at the Capital Area Food Bank.

To the Eagles and Cubs the Father McKenna Center says a very loud “THANK YOU!”



From the desk of

## Kimberly Cox, FMC President

This issue of The Good News opens with an invitation to check out our new website, and to follow us on Facebook or Instagram. These are exciting developments and provide new ways for us to connect with more people and share the stories of people whose lives are changed, like Darnell Harvey featured in the Guest Spotlight.

Yet, no matter how exciting these new social media opportunities are, they can never take the place of a genuine encounter between two people. A warm handshake and a bright smile can only be experienced in person. These encounters are possible at the Center through the generous spirit of our volunteers and donors who, like the Wednesday Breakfast Team whom you met on page 3, provide a listening heart to every person who walks through our doors.

Our volunteers and donors made it possible for us to provide Thanksgiving Dinner to over 250 families this year and groceries to nearly 100 families each week in November. Much of the success of our Hypothermia/Transition Program rests on the encounter between men in the Program and the wonderful families from Gonzaga who prepare and share a meal with them.

This same generous spirit brought the Christ-child to the human family over 2000 years ago. I believe that God wanted to have direct contact – a warm handshake and bright smile – with us. Our loving God became incarnate. I see this same incarnational love in our volunteers and our donors. As the prophet said,

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son  
and they shall name him Emmanuel”  
which means “God is with us.” [Mt 1:23]

I believe that *God is with us* in every volunteer or donor who reaches out and touches a life! At this is the time of year we celebrate the many blessings in our lives. We all recognize that the greatest gifts are not purchased from a store but are experienced in the heart. This year I pray that each of us can celebrate the holidays finding God in all things.

## Thanksgiving Basket Program



One of the great cultural traditions in America is a Thanksgiving Feast - turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes, other vegetables and something sweet for dessert.

For many families who frequent our Food Pantry, such a feast would be unthinkable without the generosity of many donors who help us provide the turkey and fixins for this feast.

Parishioners at Holy Trinity have, for many years, provided 150-plus turkeys and bags of “fixins.” We also receive support from Connolly

School of the Holy Child and St. Bernadette School in Silver Spring. Holy Child provides more than 100 bags of “fixins” and St. Bernadette provides 35 turkeys and 70 bags of “fixins.”

The Monday before Thanksgiving we welcome some 220-plus families who pick up a turkey and the fixins, and we distribute an additional 30 to 50 bags and turkeys on Tuesday. It is a big task, but when it is over it really feels wonderful to know that we are making a differ-

