



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R I N C



MEETING NEEDS . . . RECLAIMING LIVES

# Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference

December 2019 Issue

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The Father McKenna Center  
 19 Eye St NW, Washington DC 20001  
 202-842-1112  
[www.fathermckennacenter.org](http://www.fathermckennacenter.org)  
 CFC Charity # 32524

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## Volunteering Makes a Real Difference

At The Father McKenna Center volunteers are the backbone of the agency. The Center has a small staff (seven full-time and one part-time), so having many dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers really makes our work possible.

From serving meals to helping in the Food Pantry or assisting our facilities specialist keep the place clean, volunteers get to engage with the men and families we help.

Are you able to join the team?

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	2 people	1 person		1 person	
Midday Meal	3 people	2 people	3 people		
Kitchen	1 person				1 person
Food Pantry	2 people	2 people			
Clothing Closet		3 people			

If you can help us, please contact Nayeli Garcia, our Volunteer Coordinator at [ngarcia@fathermckennacenter.org](mailto:ngarcia@fathermckennacenter.org) or (202) 842-1112.

Come join in the fun!

## An FMC Holiday Tradition

### Lessons & Carols

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

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.

## Volunteer Spotlight

### Mike Murray “A Man for Others!”

Mike Murray is “the king of cole slaw” at The Father McKenna Center. A humble man, Mike is always ready to share the good news of others, but he is a special part of the Center’s volunteer program.

He has been coming as a weekly volunteer for about a year, but he has been a part of the Center for a lot longer. “I went to Gonzaga, graduating in 1962,



and I knew Fr. McKenna from when my sons were at Gonzaga.” His five sons are all Gonzaga grads, and the Murray clan often helped out, and supported the work of the Center. “My wife is a great cook, and she would prepare a meal that we would share with the Center.”

“I learned to give back from my parents, and there is nothing that makes me

prouder than to see my sons now being able to give back. My oldest is just retiring from the Marine Corps and he has begun taking Wounded Warriors on hunting trips. A simple task, but one that changes lives. Fr. McKenna taught us that sometimes the smallest act of kindness can make a real difference in people’s lives.”

Mike’s cole slaw (his mother’s special recipe) is always a treat at the Center, and the men look forward to it! Thank you, Mike!

## Guest Spotlight

### Orion Lord



“My faith in God was the grounding I needed, and The Father McKenna Center helped me to build on that!” Orion Lord, a recent “graduate” of The Father McKenna Center, reflected on his experience when he

returned to the Center to let Cortez know he has now moved into a place of his own!

Orion is an Army National Guard veteran who struggled with substance abuse. He came to DC a little more than a year ago and his drinking got the better of him. He ended up losing everything, and found himself at Central Union Mission, where he learned of The Father McKenna Center. “The Center provided a safe space for me, helped me meet my material needs, and then I allowed myself to really listen to Cortez McDaniel and I connected with Walt Grazer (a regular volunteer spiritual guide for the men). They helped me reconnect with my faith in myself.”

Through Help USA, a program to assist homeless vets, Orion has found a place to live. Located on the grounds of the former Walter Reed Hospital, he had everything but a television, and the Center had one to offer him! (He is pictured with the TV before it was delivered to him.) Orion is now very excited to move into a new phase of his life – vocational rehab, so he can support himself.

“I had to do the hard work, but Cortez was my coach and guide along the road. I am forever grateful.”

## Save the Date

### Jigs & Reels

Sunday, February 23, 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.

## Father McKenna Center Wish List

The Father McKenna Center relies on the generous support of the community.

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 (16 oz. 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

# Our Volunteers at Work



**Many Thanks to Each of You!**



From the desk of

# Kimberly Cox, FMC President

I have been thinking about gifts, gifting and giftedness. We are in the midst of three great seasons: Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas. All three have many gifts to offer to us if we just take time and pay attention.

Thanksgiving offers us the gift of gratitude. During November, we notice how the days get shorter and the nights get colder. The antidote to falling spirits is gratitude. Thanksgiving reminds us of the many blessings that we have and that we can share. As I look around the newly renovated Father McKenna Center, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the generosity of donors that have made this beautiful space possible. I am moved to dedicate myself to an even higher level of service, providing love and care for the people who come to us each day. Often we hear from our Food Pantry Patrons how much they enjoy the new space – the comfortable chairs while they wait and the bright pleasant atmosphere for shopping. In the Day Program, we can see a change in the attitude among many of the men who come here. An increasing number of the men have asked how they can help in the Center – to sweep and mop the floors, or to clean up the tables. They tell me that they want to help us out of gratitude. Cortez McDaniel, our Director of Services, has said, "The new space has lifted the spirits of the men who come here and it helps to lift their sights as well."



Patience is the gift offered to us by Advent. It is a season dedicated to waiting. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are not accustomed to waiting, and we have certainly lost the ability to wait patiently. How can we notice the great beauty around us, if we don't take the time to pay attention? When a man faces the chaos of homelessness, it takes time to uncover his story and learn how best to accompany him on the journey to a better life. Our case managers offer the gift of patience here. They pay attention to what each man says – and what he doesn't say. For many of these men this is the first time in a long time that someone has patiently listened to their story. The new offices for staff have made the men feel safer and better able to trust.

The gifts of Christmas are different for each of us. For me they are Joy, Hope and Love. This year I have a new appreciation for the gifts that others bring. At our staff retreat this fall staff members and some key volunteers took a survey that helped us identify our strengths – the gifts that we each bring to work and to the rest of our lives. The strengths that the Center's staff bring include kindness and teamwork, bravery and zest, honesty and spirituality. When these strengths are brought to service of others at the Center, they are truly gifts. I appreciate my staff in a different way now, aware of their giftedness, and I rejoice in the good works that these gifts make possible.



In this marvelous season, I wish you the gifts of gratitude, patience and appreciation for the giftedness of others. As the men who come to the Center lift their sights to a better life, let all of us, lift our sights like the Magi who looked up to follow a star. A star that led to a new understanding of God's love and our lives within that love. Rejoice with me in the gifts that surround each of us– in the beauty of a star and in the gifts that we find in each other.

## Slow Miracles Campaign Wrap-Up

With the support of more than 525 donors, The Father McKenna Center has successfully completed the *Slow Miracles Campaign*. The campaign was authorized by the Board of Directors in April 2018, to provide funds for much-needed renovations in the lower level of St. Aloysius Church. We have now just about completed those renovations, and have turned the Center into a more efficient and welcoming place for the men and families we serve.

All of this work was done so that the Center can better serve those who rely on us each day. We now have a dining room to seat 84, an appropriately sized general meeting room, a smaller seminar/meeting room, quality offices for all staff and new bathrooms that will serve our guests and patrons.

To each of our donors, I offer a deeply felt word of gratitude.

We invite everyone to come see *The Father McKenna Center 2.0!*

