



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R I N C



MEETING NEEDS . . . RECLAIMING LIVES

Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference

June 2020 Issue

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CFC Charity # 32524

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

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“Doing the COVID-19 Pivot”

2020 has brought many changes to The Father McKenna Center. And each of them has taught us so much.

In February we celebrated the launch of The Father McKenna Center 2.0 with the Grand Re-Opening of the Center after a year of renovations. The “new” Center was having a very positive impact on programming and plans were underway to launch new initiatives that would impact the men that we serve.

March brought unplanned changes. The Center, to cooperate with the DC Department of Human Services decision to keep overnight shelters open 24/7, chose to temporarily suspend the Day Program for Men Experiencing Homelessness. We also chose to extend the Hypothermia / Transition Program, to provide the eight men in the program a safe and secure environment to “stay at home.”

The men in the Hypothermia Program created a special community, and they launched a “cottage industry” making masks to share with the broader community.

We also chose to maintain the Food Pantry, to serve the families who rely on the Center for supplemental groceries. The number of patrons declined as people followed the Mayor’s pleas to “stay at home.” We served about 10 patrons daily, down from the 17 to 20 during January and February.

The Center also initiated a Community Food Hub, in partnership with Capital Area Food Bank. This food distribution is available to any DC resident, and offers a variety of non-perishable goods and often produce or bread.

Our three young full-time volunteers stepped up to lead the efforts on the Food Pantry and Food Hub. (See page two for more on “The Three Amigos!”)

As we move into the summer we are making plans to re-open the Day Program. We have established a Task Force to carefully plan this re-opening. We are trying to be cognizant of all our constituencies (staff, volunteers, guests, patrons and visitors). We are planning for The Father McKenna Center 3.0!



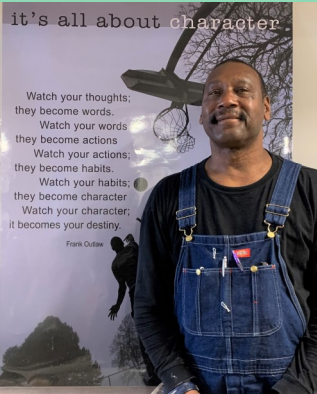
Guest Spotlight

James Jones

Mr. James Jones has done the work of mastering his mind. His story of self-improvement and sacrifice serves as an example for anyone who comes through our doors seeking a better life. In conversation he will often advise, "Change you must, or suffer you will." His life exemplifies change. He has obtained his GED and completed training in the trades of Carpentry, Plumbing, and HVAC. As a participant in our Hypother-Transition Program, Mr. Jones shared his philosophy

and faith with us. He became the engine of the team that sewed over 250 facemasks which were donated to a continuing care center. Mr. Jones now works as a Custodian and Maintenance Man at three buildings close to the Center, and is quickly earning trust and responsibility. We look forward to having Mr. Jones back at the center soon to share his story with the men, as well as words of advice that can help us all as we redefine our lives after the COVID-19 Pandemic:

"You have to spend a lot of time in front of the mirror and think about what you have done, who you might have hurt and decide if that is who you want to be."



Save the Date

4th Annual Walk for McKenna
Saturday, September 19, 2020
8:00 am @ Gonzaga

We are also making plans to host the Walk "virtually" if we are unable to gather in person.



Entry Fee is \$35.00 (includes a t-shirt and a Continental Breakfast)

www.fathermckennacenter.org/walk

Volunteer Spotlight

The Three Amigos



For the past several years The Father McKenna Center has been served by two groups of full-time volunteers, The Jesuit Volunteer Corp and the Franciscan Mission Service.

This year we have three young men who have truly gone "above and beyond." Michael Broughton, Joseph Smith and Matthew Fichter have responded with grace and determination to make a difference for the families we are serving through the Food Pantry and the Community Food Hub.

They have bonded, becoming closer—almost brothers. Each has made an indelible mark on the Center and on the people we serve.

Kim Cox reflected, "Michael, Matthew and Joseph have truly done remarkable things and we are so proud of them for this. We've been blessed!"

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

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 warmer weather upon us, we need:

- Men's Shorts
- Casual shirts (polos & t-shirts)
- Packages of new underwear or socks

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

A Changing of the Guard - New Board Leadership for the Center

At the June meeting of the Board of Directors of The Father McKenna Center there will be a major shift. After several years of amazing stability, five members of the Board have reached their term limits, and there will be a new Chair and four new members.

The Center has been amazingly well served by its Board which has charted a course that includes the very successful *Slow Miracles Campaign* and the total renovation of the lower level of St. Aloysius Church.

Departing Members

The five departing members of the Board have combined for more than 50 years of service to The Father McKenna Center!

Gerry Nolan served as the Board Chair since 2015. He led with equanimity and dedication and has grown to be a great advocate for the Center's very strong leadership team. Gerry came to the Board after serving as President of the Gonzaga Fathers Club.



Maureen McCarty was the Chair of the Program Committee. The Program Committee has been instrumental in supporting the work of the Center. She came to the Board after serving as President of the Gonzaga Mothers Club.

Walter Hill has been the Chair of the Finance Committee, steering a steady path of fiscal responsibility to put the Center on solid financial footing. Walter also leads the Omega Psi Phi Omega Chapter's service at the Center.



Peggy Still has been one of the "worker bees" on the Board, always willing to help where extra hands are needed. Peggy also served as a tutor to some of the men we served, teaching basic reading skills.

Kevin Curtin is a Gonzaga grad and dad, and has served the Center since 2005. He has been the Board Treasurer since the Board was officially initiated in 2012. He has been a quiet force for us!



New Chair

Paul Warren, a 1968 graduate of Gonzaga, will serve as Chair for the next two years. Paul is very involved with the development of new plans for the Center as we emerge from COVID-19, and is looking to help launch the "McKenna Men" program to support "graduates" of the programs at the Center.



New Board Members



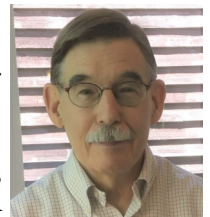
Christopher Lucey, a graduate of Gonzaga and Georgetown University, is Managing Director at Newmark Knight Frank, a commercial real estate firm. Chris is a life-long member of Holy Trinity Parish and brings a commitment to The Father McKenna Center that arises from his years of Jesuit education and being a "Man for Others."

Kate McAuliffe, a parishioner at Blessed Sacrament Parish, is an Attorney at HoganLovells, one of DC's premier legal firms. She served as associate counsel to House Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Missouri). Today she is the mother of two Gonzaga students, and a recent Gonzaga graduate (Class of 2020).



Barbara Patocka is a long-time active member of Holy Trinity Parish, having served on the Parish Council and as chair of the Finance Council of the parish. Through her involvement at the parish she was introduced to the Center many years ago, and has been a consistent donor and supporter of our works. Her professional work includes a 25-year career at Mobil (later ExxonMobil) in the finance and corporate strategy areas.

Rick Ruzicka, brings an international perspective to the Board. For more than two decades he has been a senior officer and leader at the American Institute in Taiwan, which serves as the principal connection between the US and Taiwan, in the absence of diplomatic relations. A career in international trade and diplomacy is balanced by Rick's background in Jesuit education (College of the Holy Cross) and his commitment to serving the marginalized. Rick is a former Gonzaga parent.





From the desk of

Kimberly Cox, FMC President

My dear friends,

My original "Notes" for June were written just before Memorial Day. I wanted to share some of the blessings and graces we had received at the Center in the challenging time of covid-19. The amazing attitudes of the men who continue in our Hypothermia/Transition Program. They have taught me so much about resilience. The deep dedication of staff who continue to make a difference whether working from home or on the front lines. Our three full-time volunteers are literally on the front lines – standing on the sidewalk in front of St. Al's to run our Food Pantry and Community Food Hub, distributing groceries to ensure that no one in our community goes hungry. The amazing generosity of our faithful donors who have stepped up providing financial support as well as equipment and canned food, always with the offer "What else can I do?"

These blessings and many more have accompanied the sadness, isolation, and disappointment so many of us have experienced in the three and a half months of the pandemic.

And now, like so many, I must pivot.

The brutal murder of George Floyd has again shone a bright light on the harsh reality of racism. It demands a response. In considering how we respond, I turn to the model we already use with the men we serve.

Our work at the Center is based on the belief that people can change and attain a better life. The staff and volunteers who provide direct service and the donors who support our work fundamentally believe in transformational change.

Our programs and support services are provided on an individual basis and each person is on a unique journey. However, the underlying principles are the same for each of those journeys – we work in the heart and in the head. Each journey begins with introspection - each man must believe he deserves a better life and build and understanding of how to attain that. This is hard work. It takes commitment, determination, persistence, and a willingness to take a long, hard look in the mirror. It includes introspection, humility, education, and personal discomfort. The journey to change is supported by case managers – teachers if you will – who accompany, support, and guide each man on the path to change.

How can we extrapolate this model to our country? To the systems that institutionalize and perpetuate racism and inequity? Just like the brave men who make their journeys of personal change at the Center, we must also believe in profound systemic change. And we must be introspective and humble. We must learn and move to action. We must do the hard work, and no longer avoid looking at the harsh reality of racism in our country. We begin in our hearts, and grow in our understand of underling causes of systemic racism.

Next Steps Together:

As a loving, faith-based community we begin with reflection and discussion of these challenging topics. We invite you to join us for a virtual gathering the week of June 29th on the theme of race, equity, and faith (details will be shared the week before).

Check for additional resources on our Webpage (www.fathermckennacenter.org) or Facebook page.

Will you join with us?

In considering this, I realize that we are also building on the foundations of my original "notes". Perhaps this is both a pivot and a supplement? There will be grace and blessings in this journey, as well as work. There will be many contexts in which to ask, "What can I do?" And this work – just like our existing service - will take resilience, dedication, and generosity.

As a Christian it is my responsibility to dig down, look in the mirror and examine my beliefs, assumptions, and actions. I am compelled to make this journey by the teachings of Jesus. He calls each of us to be with him in challenging the status quo. This will be uncomfortable. I will sit with the discomfort and learn.

Together we can work to heal our community!

Community Support for FMC

When COVID-19 forced the shut down of much of life many non-profit organizations struggled to be relevant and saw their donations slow to a crawl.

The Father McKenna Center has been blessed by a community of friends and supporters. In late March we asked for a treadmill and exercise bike for the men who were living here. Within 20 minutes we had multiple offers for each! In mid-April we asked for pop-up tents, and within 25 minutes we had offers for more than a dozen!

And the financial support of the Center has been amazing! Between March 16 and June 4 we have received nearly 800 contributions totaling more than \$220,000 to support our work.

Our gratitude is overwhelming, and we can never express our deep appreciation of how the community has embraced the Center and the families and men we serve.

Thank You