



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R • I N C



Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference

March 2021 Issue

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The McKenna Man Initiative

One of the major challenges for the Center is to see a man who we have helped secure a place to live return to the Center and report he is “back on the street.” All too often it happens because the men are ill-prepared to truly live on their own.

To help address this issue, The Father McKenna Center has developed The McKenna Man Initiative. The goals of the initiative are to support these men for the first six-months to a year after they secure housing and to offer them guidance and training in life-skills that will help them live on their own.

The Better Life Pyramid, the McKenna Center’s “step-by-step” guide from homelessness to stability, recognizes that independent living requires a network of support for each person. But living alone typically isolates these men. The McKenna Man Initiative aims to build friendships and support networks for the men.



“The goal of The McKenna Man Initiative is to offer men who have made great progress sustain that progress. We want to ensure that the men succeed long term. And we know that loneliness can be a major trap for those who used to be homeless. The McKenna Man Initiative is intended to give these men a support network and good friends,” reflected Cortez McDaniel.

How You Can Support The McKenna Man Initiative

One of the key components of the McKenna Man Initiative will be a monthly dinner for 18-20 men. This will be an opportunity for a social gathering and for some substantive support. We will need families willing to prepare and serve that meal. To sign up for this role during the 2nd half of 2021, contact Michael Broughton at mbroughton@fathermckennacenter.org

We also need people willing to serve as trainers and mentors for the men. If you have a skill (e.g. simple cooking, housekeeping, etc.) or knowledge (financial management) that you are willing to share, please contact Michael Broughton. Eventually we will seek mentors who will provide friendship and emotional support for the men. Please stay tuned for more information in the year ahead!

Volunteer Spotlight

Marie and Allan L'Etoile

Marie and Allan grace The Father McKenna Center most Tuesday afternoons, serving in the Food Pantry. "I do it to focus on others" said Marie who has faced physical challenges for a couple years. Marie graduated from Georgetown University and spent her career working for the federal government. Allan added, "After eight years of Jesuit education and 33 years teaching at Gonzaga, I know we are called to be 'men and women for others.'"

Allan retired from Gonzaga last June (he taught Eng-



lish, worked with the Gonzaga Dramatic Association and was moderator of the Year-book), and commented, "we choose to volunteer at The Father McKenna Center because it's an excuse to 'keep my finger on the pulse of Gonzaga! And besides, we deliver

food to Central Union Mission from our local Wawa store. And we know how important the Food Pantry is for people in the neighborhood."

Marie and Allan have two grown sons (both Gonzaga grads) and two grandchildren. Allan added, "and it's fun—we know that we've done something good!" Marie concluded, "when we leave we are tired, but it's a good tired feeling. And we have fun!"

Save the Date

5th Annual Walk for McKenna
Saturday, September 25, 2021
8:00 am @ Gonzaga

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



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

www.fathermckennacenter.org/walk

Guest Spotlight

Travaughn Mack



Travaughn is a DC native, and proud to be one. He is a quiet, well mannered man who has struggled with homelessness since an ill-advised relationship fell apart more than 18 months ago.

He has been a regular guest at The Father McKenna Center since we reopened in July of 2020.

He is working with Michael Broughton on a variety of fronts. They are pictured above reviewing job opportunities for Travaughn.

Most evenings Travaughn takes one of the DC shuttles to the Catholic Charities shelter on the campus of the former St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Southeast DC. And most mornings he is waiting for the Center to open at 7:30. Each day his routine includes a shower at the Center, and a check-in with Michael.

"I am making progress along the steps of the Better Life Pyramid and I know that Michael and Cortez are helping me stay focused on my goals. I believe that I will reach those goals in the next few months."

When Lisa Goode, a former director of St. Al's Father McKenna Center in the 1980's and '90's, called looking for someone to do a few chores for her, Cortez and Michael immediately said, "Let's get Travaughn."

Travaughn is "on the road."

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 Vegetables (especially spinach, collard greens and green beans)
- Canned Baked Beans (28 oz or smaller)

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 Spring approaching, we need:

- ♦ Light Jackets
- ♦ Jeans (all sizes)

If you have suits and sports coats to donate, please call Jubilee Jobs at (202) 667-8970.

The Father McKenna Center Responds to Social Justice Challenges



Horace McKenna, SJ was a man “ahead of his time.” He was always leading the way on issues that impacted the poor and the marginalized in society. If he were alive “Black Lives Matter” and other rallying cries for Social Justice would fill his heart with passion for change.

The Father McKenna Center has launched a new initiative to engage donors, friends and anyone interested in addressing the pressing social issues of the day.

Each month Kim Cox, President of the Center, hosts a 90-minute discussion on a topic connected to the key issues of our day—racial and social injustice.

These are interactive discussions that include breakout groups and opportunities for all participants to hear and be heard on these topics.

The gatherings, hosted on ZOOM, are scheduled for the last Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. The next

scheduled session is Tuesday, April 27 at 7:00 pm. The topic of the conversation will be “anti-racism.”

We invite you to participate! To receive the ZOOM invitation, please contact Lisa Noel, Kim’s administrative assistant, at lnoel@fathermckennacenter.org.

How You Can Help Food Distribution at FMC

Each day at the Father McKenna Center we host two or three food distribution programs that directly assist DC families secure the food they need in the midst of the pandemic and the economic havoc the pandemic has caused. Much of the work is borne by our full-time volunteers, but we rely on a steady flow of generous volunteers to help with the programs.

The Center also relies on generous donations of food to support our distribution efforts. The items most in demand are: Baked Beans, Jelly or Jam and Pancake Syrup. If you wish to donate, please purchase smaller packages (most families are 1 to 3 people). If you have food to deliver, call the Center (202) 842-1112 to arrange a convenient drop-off time.

The Food Pantry operates every day from 1:30 to 2:30 pm, serving 13-20 families most days. We need 2



Domonique Thompson and Erin Brown prepare to distribute food bags to our neighbors. You can join our efforts by being a volunteer. Come be our partner!

-4 volunteers to support this effort.

The Community Food Hub operates at The Father McKenna Center on Monday and Thursday from 1:30 to 2:30 pm. We need 1-2 additional volunteers for this program.

Finally, we distribute pre-prepared sandwich meals every day (M-F) from 1:00 to 2:00 pm in front of St. Aloysius

Church. The meals are provided by DC’s Department of Human Services. We hand them out to anyone who comes by! We need 2 volunteers each day for this effort.

To sign up as a volunteer, visit our website (www.fathermckennacenter.org) and click on “VOLUNTEER” on the top right of the home page. If you have questions, please contact Emily Dold at edold@fathermckennacenter.org.



From the desk of

Kimberly Cox, FMC President

March is an in-between month. The familiar saying goes, "In like a lion, out like a lamb." It is not heavy winter, but it is not yet spring. When you leave the house in the morning, you find frost on your car and by afternoon, the sun is blazing. March keeps us on our toes and always checking the conditions. This phase of the corona virus pandemic feels a little bit like March. We are in-between – some people have both vaccines, some have not gotten one yet, and some folks are between the two recommended inoculations. Perhaps we can relax a little, but we have to

be prepared to tighten up. In other words, don't put away your winter coat!

The men who come to our Day Program committed to ending their experience of homelessness are also in a place of in-between. We invite our guests on a journey to stability and hope in their lives. By its definition, a journey is about being "in-between." We know where we are beginning and where we want to end. Each of us needs guides and guideposts on our life's journey. For men who are working their way out of homelessness, our Case Management team members serve as guides and The Better Life Pyramid provides the guideposts. This journey asks the men to begin with a clear look at themselves and their lives based on Honesty, Humility and Self-Awareness. I see this as work of the heart – work that is not easy, and in some cases uncomfortable. Once the heart is converted and a guest believes that he deserves a better life, the next step is to help him understand how to get there. Our Better Life Pyramid has the guideposts that will lead to a stable and fulfilling life.

We are now in the middle of Lent, another journey that Christian people take each year. This year I am finding my inspiration in the journeys made by the men in our Day Program. The Lenten Journey is a journey of the heart and of the mind. I know where I am beginning and where I want to end – a life closer to God. I have to approach this journey with Honesty, Humility and Self-Awareness. I have a spiritual director and a faith community as my guides, and am using Ignatian resources as my guideposts. This journey is not always comfortable (especially when the Self-Awareness kicks in!) but I feel like I am growing and I know where I want to go. I am grateful to everyone and every prayer that accompanies me on this journey. See below for wisdom from Pope Francis to accompany a Lenten journey.

This Newsletter opened with a piece about our McKenna Man Initiative. We are so proud of the men who have completed our program and finished the difficult work demanded by the Better Life Pyramid. So many have reclaimed their lives and found dignity and stability. At the same time, we have learned that they remain on a journey, and need to continue building support systems and skills to sustain lives that have meaning and purpose.

As I bring these notes to a close, I can see that we are all on a journey of some sort, leaning on our guides and seeking guideposts. Just like March we are all "in-between." I pray you find many blessings this spring and have a Joyous Easter.

Lent—A Season of Almsgiving, Prayer and Fasting

Pope Francis Offers a new take on fasting

The Gospel reading for Ash Wednesday is taken from the The Gospel of Matthew (Mt 6:1-6, 16-18). It is a "roadmap" for the Lenten season, offering a new view of the traditional penitential actions of almsgiving, prayer and fasting.

Pope Francis offers us a 21st Century take on fasting:

Fast from sadness... and be filled with gratitude

Fast from anger... and be filled with patience

Fast from worries... and have trust in God

Fast from pressures... and be prayerful

Fast from words... and be silent so you can listen

May your Lenten journey be a time of renewal and grace, and may Easter joy fill our world!