



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R • I N C



Slow Miracles... Making a Difference

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The Father McKenna Center

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Hypothermia/Transition Program Opens

On November 1st, the Center welcomed twelve men into the Hypothermia/Transition (H/T) Program. We were unable to hold the H/T Program last year due to the pandemic, and the entire staff is thrilled to return to this work. The H/T Program will run through March 30th and is a structured overnight program for men who are ready for steps beyond the Day Program to work towards permanent housing and a stable and independent life.

Men who enter the H/T Program have demonstrated they are willing to “do the work” necessary to end their homelessness. *“One of the most important things these men need as they are trying to change their lives is a good night’s rest,”* says **Cortez McDaniel**. *“A guaranteed, safe place to sleep and a supportive community make all the difference on the road to success.”* Cortez believes this group has a very high chance of achieving its goals. Over the past seven years between 70% and 75% of the participants have achieved one or more of their goals.

Michael Broughton is the Coordinator of the H/T Program this year. *“In the evenings, I can provide intensive case management. We have continuity and they make better progress. In addition, the community that they build is strong because they share a common goal.”*

A special ingredient of the H/T Program's success is the evening meal served by families from Gonzaga (see p.3).



Guest Spotlight: Antony Moves Ahead

One of the first things you would notice about Antony Kargbo is that he moves with quiet determination. He came to the Center about eight months ago after losing his housing. During an 11 am **Life Skills Meeting**, he realized that he had a drinking problem. Antony was ready to change his life and our Case Managers sent him to a residential treatment program. He came right back to the Center after completing the program.

Antony saw the value of working the **My Better Life Pyramid** and Cortez was impressed with him. *"I saw that he had a good work ethic and I didn't have to convince him to make some changes to improve his life."* Antony is working hard to get his documents in order to apply for refugee status. It's a long process, but Antony is very patient and knows this is important to building a stable life.



When Jhonny, our janitor, went on vacation, Cortez asked Antony if he would like to work for us for a week. Immediately Antony answered "Yes." It was a true pleasure for all the staff to get to know him a little better. He has a strong work ethic and is very thorough. When Antony received his pay, he registered for a tailoring course so that he could support himself. Antony created a pillow (see picture) in his first class and gifted it to the Center.

Antony has been selected as the Alternate Monitor for the Hypothermia/Transition Program, where he has additional responsibilities and provides leadership for the other participants. Determination and hard work will continue to lift him up to the life that he wants.

Staff Spotlight: Emily Dold - Volunteer & Food Pantry Program Manager

First thing in the morning, volunteers at the Center are greeted by Emily Dold, who provides a welcome, instruction, and coaching. At the end of the day, patrons of our Food Pantry are also greeted by Emily. She knows them by name and helps to create the warm, welcoming environment that makes our patrons feel comfortable and honors their dignity.

Emily came to the Center through the Franciscan Mission Service as a one-year volunteer in August 2020. Her entire experience at the Center has been under the cloud of the pandemic. However, you would never know there are any clouds when you are with Emily.



In August, Emily accepted her current position as the Manager for the Volunteer and Food Pantry Programs. In the middle of her second year at the Center, Emily continues to make a difference for everyone that comes through our doors. When asked about Emily, Cortez said, *"I am so glad that Emily agreed to stay and work with us. I know that we can count on her and I can see how her faith shapes the way she treats everyone."*

When asked to reflect on her experience at the Center, Emily wrote, *"This place is so meaningful because we aim to build here. We build by turning ingredients into a delicious meal, growing in relationship with one another, educating student volunteers, and so much more. Here is a culture that recognizes and emphasizes its community members' dignity and how with that dignity we are called to become connected contributors to this community."*

A Powerful Partnership: The GMC and Hypothermia

The Gonzaga Mothers Club (The GMC) provides vital support for our Hypothermia/Transition Program every year. GMC members and their families provide evening meals for our residential guests, serve those meals with love and then eat together with the men. This experience - breaking bread together - is transformative for both the men in the program and the families who serve.

Current Board Member Kate McAuliffe shares, *"My family has been volunteering for the Hypothermia Program for the last eight years. We have prepared and served meals to the men taking part in the Hypothermia/Transition Program. The Program offers volunteers an opportunity to learn about the journey the men have walked. It has given my family the opportunity to serve, share and learn. [It] reflects the powerful simplicity of sharing a meal with someone and the impact that meeting and conversation can have on everyone at the table. Every time we left a dinner we knew we got more than we gave."*

For many people, the Hypothermia/Transition Program is where they forge lifelong ties with the Center. Lauren Malone shares, *"During the 11 years my boys were at Gonzaga our family cooked, served, and enjoyed many meals with the men of the Hypothermia Program. My youngest graduated from Gonzaga in 2019 and I continue to be involved with the Center as a board member and [volunteer]."*



This year, Peter Turner (Class of 2025) prepared and delivered the first evening meal for the men. Thank you, Peter!

We deeply appreciate the work of the GMC and all the support they give our guests - thank you.

Current Needs: Our Wish List

The Father McKenna Center relies on the generous support of the community. To drop off a donation, please call 202-842-1112 to let us know you are coming. We'll help you bring your items into the Center. You can also ship items to us directly through our Amazon wishlist:

<https://bit.ly/McKennaWishlist>

For more information, please visit our website: www.fathermckennacenter.org. Thank you!

Clothing

Our key need this season is for **sturdy shoes**, particularly in **sizes 13,14, and 15**.

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

From the desk of

Kimberly Cox, FMC President



It is all about the journey.

As I look back over the past seven amazing years at The Father McKenna Center, I am grateful for all of the opportunities for encounter and accompaniment. From the moment that I stepped into the Center and sat in the back of the 11 o'clock Life Skills meeting where I encountered a group of men who were expressing their support for one of their fellows who had completed 21 days of sobriety, I was utterly taken by the care and concern shown in this place. Those men revealed their full humanity – something that I might have missed. From that first meeting, I was taught to pay attention.

My next encounter was with Rev. Horace McKenna, SJ. Through his writings, I discovered the great love he had for everyone that he met. He wrote *"I really believe that every person is a revelation of God – the joy of God, the love of God. I feel that the human person on the street is the appearance of Jesus Christ consumed with human needs."* This profound insight guides our work here at the Center and has shaped my life. Guests in our Day Program and patrons of our Food Pantry have told me that they feel safe and respected here.

It has truly been an honor to accompany the dedicated staff as we have built and strengthened programs and procedures. I looked forward to coming to the Center each day to work alongside such gifted professionals. We have grown on this journey – grown into a team that truly makes a difference in our neighbors' lives. I want to thank all my colleagues who welcomed me into this journey seven years ago, particularly current senior staff members Cortez McDaniel and Christine Melekian. You have been true companions on this journey. Together we rose to the challenge of COVID-19 and kept the Center open to serve people in need. I am very proud of our efforts and our results.

It has been so rewarding to accompany the young full-time volunteers who bring so much energy and faith to their work. Supporting them in their encounters with our neighbors in need as they grow as professionals has been one of the gifts of this work.

It has truly been a blessing to share this journey with students and staff from Gonzaga, as well as the mission-led members of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps. Volunteers of all sorts have made such a difference to our work and in my life. Each has brought a unique love and commitment to our work. They have lifted me up and encouraged me – just as they have done for our guests and patrons.

I have been wonderfully supported by a fantastic Board of Directors where I found both friends and mentors. Together we have made a difference for our community and I am confident that the future of the Center is in good hands. Yes, we raised \$4.5M and renovated the facility and while this will remain, for me the longer-lasting changes are those in my heart.

In the Hebrew scriptures the number 7 signifies fulfillment or completion. It is fitting then, that after seven years I complete my service at The Father McKenna Center. I leave the Center a better person. I believe I am more compassionate toward everyone – including myself. I believe I have become more patient. My faith has grown as I learned to practice and pray by following St. Ignatius.

I feel deeply fulfilled by this work and grateful to everyone who has made this journey with me. With a grateful heart,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kim".