



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R • I N C

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Summer 2024 Newsletter

8th Annual Walk4McKenna Saturday, September 28, 2024



Members of the McKenna Community at the 2021 Walk4McKenna

Please join us this September for the 8th Annual Walk4McKenna. The proceeds from this event will support the work of the McKenna Center. We will honor Father Horace McKenna, SJ by walking through the neighborhood he served.

Known as the "Priest of the Poor," Father McKenna provided food and comfort to his neighbors. We will spread his message throughout the community.

Location: Gonzaga College High School - 19 Eye St NW / 900 N. Capitol St NW

Registration: 8:30 am - 9:30 am

Walk Begins: 9:30 am

Register today on [The Walk Website!](#)



Hope Begins Here

Between October 1, 2023 and May 31, 2024, the McKenna Center:

- Served 22,439 nutritious meals to men experiencing homelessness.
 - Provided 648 households with 1,738 family members with groceries at our Food Pantry.
 - Distributed hundreds of pieces of clothing.
 - Expanded case management services to Food Pantry patrons.
 - Offered free medical and legal service to Day Program guests and Food Pantry patrons.
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Lives Changed

Highlights of the 2023-2024 Hypothermia Transition Program



Hypothermia Transition Program graduate Theodore P. with Director of Services Cortez McDaniel

As we are in the throes of record heat, it is hard to remember the dangers of the winter months for men experiencing homelessness.

From November 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024, the McKenna Center housed 12 men ages 34 to 63 in our Hypothermia Transition Program. Each night, the McKenna Center provided our guests with a clean bed, shower, case management, and breathing room to get their life in order in a predictable environment.

Nine of the 12 Hypothermia Transition Program guests completed the program, with 7 guests now in stable housing and 8 guests employed. One guest never had a primary care physician until the McKenna Center connected him with one.

The McKenna Center does not shy away from serving men with serious challenges. Ten program guests suffered from drug or alcohol addiction and/or mental health disorders.

The McKenna Center staff helped many of our guests get a mental health assessment and treatment that enabled them to succeed. Despite the challenges, these men changed their lives.

Many thanks to the Gonzaga Mothers Club whose members provided a home-cooked meal for our guests each night. They and their families joined the men for dinner which reintroduced them to family interactions.

Success Stories

- A 52 year-old veteran - who experienced unexplained fits of anger and other behaviors that kept him unemployed and isolated from friends and family - is now living in permanent housing and interacting with others after being diagnosed with and treated for PTSD.
 - A 38 year-old guest is living independently in a single occupancy room, having secured a construction job and saving enough money to purchase a motorbike to make food deliveries to supplement his income.
 - a 54 year-old guest who had been coming to the McKenna Center off and on for four years stabilized his life by securing a job and housing, as well as enrolling in a building maintenance certification program.
 - A 59 year-old man who had struggled with alcoholism for many years in now living with a sober relative and working after we facilitated outpatient treatment for him, and he started attending AA meetings.
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New Partnership

Albertsons Cos. and Uber Direct Food Rescue Initiative



Volunteer assists Food Pantry shopper. (Melissa Lyttle for Uber)

The McKenna Center was one of three DC nonprofit organizations selected to participate in the Albertsons Cos. and Uber Direct Food Rescue Initiative.

Uber drivers pick up surplus food from local Safeways and deliver it to nonprofit organizations and food banks. McKenna Center Volunteer and Food Pantry Manager Emily Dold was quoted in their press release distributed nationwide announcing the expansion of this program to three additional cities.

According to Emily, this program has been a tremendous blessing to the McKenna Center Food Pantry. "Our dedicated Food Pantry team juggles various responsibilities throughout the day, which sometimes leaves them unable to collect donations from grocery stores promptly. We are so grateful for our partnership with Albertsons Cos. and Uber. The food donated brings joy. It brings relief. It nourishes and heals. We have been able to offer better food options to our patrons."

Volunteer Spotlight

Remembering Pat Kisicki



On April 3rd, the Father McKenna Center lost Pat Kisicki, an integral member of our team. Pat was a much beloved volunteer for more than a decade along with her husband Don who remains a valued member of the McKenna family. Pat ran the McKenna Center's reception desk twice a week and assisted with the food pantry. We miss her beyond words.

Pat had a gift for remembering names, providing unconditional support, and never judging any guest. Executive Director Dennis Dee experienced Pat's compassion firsthand when he first walked into the McKenna Center in 2014 at the lowest point in his life.

"Pat always greeted me by name and noticed me in a way that was reassuring and comforting," said Dennis. "Pat was nurturing at a low point in my life and provided me with encouragement as I put the pieces of my life back together. She never shamed or judged me when I shared with her the details of my alcoholism and homelessness."

Pat's friends and family donated more than \$3,000 to The Father McKenna Center in her memory. Dennis remarked that "Pat is still helping us."

Thank You to Our Community



100 Half Gallons of Milk Donated to Celebrate World Milk Day.

USDA Dairy Program Deputy Administrator Dana Coale personally delivered more than 100 half gallons of milk valued at \$720. The milk was distributed to our Food Pantry patrons.

Gonzaga Student and Eagle Scout Collected More than 500 Pieces of Clothing Valued at \$3,000.

Rising Senior and Eagle Scout candidate Malcolm Wyatt spearheaded this drive in the community.



Phoenix Park Hotel Employees Collected \$500 Worth of Food.

Assistant General Manager Dustin Seraile delivered these donations to the McKenna Center and unloaded them with the help of Gonzaga volunteers.

Gonzaga Student Government Association Raised \$2,725 for the McKenna Center.

Many thanks to SGA President Andrew LaFrankie who led this effort. Two students model their USA Day outfits as part of Spirit Week.



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