



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R • I N C

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Men and Women for Others

Dear Friends,

As 2024 comes to an end, I want to thank you for being a generous donor to The Father McKenna Center. Without your support, we could not keep up with the increasing demand for our services.

One of the most gratifying aspects of my work is to witness how our staff and volunteers live up to the Jesuit ideal of being men and women for others. Our programs are designed to humanize the communities we serve and facilitate opportunities for connection, friendship, and learning.



At the McKenna Center, our clients are not just treated as another number – they are known and valued as individuals. It always brings me joy seeing volunteers and clients “catch up” on each others’ lives, a regular occurrence across our programs.

In 2024, 1,083 volunteers provided 12,784 hours of service which equated to more than 6 additional staff. We are so grateful to them.

During this Christmas and holiday season, please consider making a gift to the McKenna Center to support this important work.

Gratefully,
Dennis Dee, Executive Director

Our 2024 Impact

This year, the Father McKenna Center:

- Served a record 36,863 nutritious meals to men struggling with homelessness, a 32% increase over 2023.
- Provided a record 805 households with 2,123 family members with groceries in our Food Pantry, a 9% increase over 2023.



- Housed a dozen men during the harsh winter months through our Hypothermia Transition Program, with 7 guests now in stable housing and 8 employed.
- Expanded case management services to Food Pantry patrons and provided 1,300 consultations.
- Offered free medical and legal services to hundreds of Day Shelter Program guests and Food Pantry patrons

The Father McKenna Center's Mission

To offer a haven of hope and dignity to men struggling with homelessness and families experiencing food insecurity.

Day Shelter Program

The centerpiece of the McKenna Center's work is its Day Shelter Program that provides men experiencing homelessness with a dignified, safe environment. McKenna Center guests range in age from early 20's to over 80, and are of every race, color, and creed, although the overwhelming majority are African American. Some men are well educated, while others do not have a high school diploma.



We see men whose lives were upended by losing their job, trauma from abuse in foster care, mental illness, addiction, and/or incarceration. Many men are isolated from their families. Some of our guests have jobs and housing, but their rent is so high they rely on the McKenna Center for meals. With your support, we provided the following services.

- **Served more than 35,000 hearty, nutritious breakfasts and lunches** , including serving more fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins as this might be a man's only meal of the day.
- **Provided more than 1,300 case management consultations** to help guests obtain vital documents needed to secure housing and public benefits and offer referrals to addiction services; mental health counseling; and job readiness, education, and training opportunities. This year, the McKenna Center expanded these services to Food Pantry patrons.
- **Offered free health services** such as specialized clinics (e.g. flu shots and podiatric care) provided by Georgetown University's HOYA Clinic and health screenings, check-ups, prescription refills, and referrals provided by Dr. William Mazella of MedStreet, a nonprofit organization that provides free healthcare for people experiencing homelessness.
- **Distributed \$44,186 worth of clothing throughout the year to guests** , including coats, gloves, hats, and thermals in preparation for the winter months.
- **Provided amenities that we take for granted** such as access to showers, laundry, toiletries, mobile phone charging, computers, and mail service.

Food Pantry



The McKenna Center provided a dignified shopping experience to low-income DC families that qualified for public benefits four days a week. While many area food pantries offer fresh produce, very few provide eggs, milk, juice, meat, and bread as we do. Rather than pre-packaging grocery bags, shoppers selected the items that met the needs of their family which reduced waste. **We are grateful for generous donations from the Alexandria Pastry Shop, Best Buns, Capital Area Food Bank, Dubliner, Giant, Great Harvest Bread Company, Keany Produce, John S. Mulholland Foundation, Panera Bread, Phoenix Park Hotel, and Safeway.**

McKenna's Legal Advocates

Headed by McKenna Center board member Dan Collopy, this program provided hundreds of Day Shelter Program guests and Food Pantry shoppers with free legal advice, referrals, and representation. Volunteer attorneys addressed issues such as child custody, child support, landlord/tenant disputes, criminal record sealing, and Social Security Income and Supplemental Social Security Disability Income. They also drafted wills and medical and financial powers of attorney. Given that many guests face mental and physical health challenges, it is important for them to designate someone they trust to make decisions for them if needed.

Hypothermia Transition Program



This program took place from November 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024. Participants were selected based on their readiness to move out of homelessness through a job, permanent or temporary housing, and commitment to sobriety and mental health. The McKenna Center offered participants a clean bed, case management, shower, and breathing room to get their life in order in a predictable environment. Each night, volunteers from the Gonzaga Mothers Club served the men a home-cooked meal and their families joined the men for dinner. Ten program guests suffered from drug or alcohol addiction and/or mental health disorders. **Nine of the 12 Hypothermia Transition Program guests completed the program, with 7 guests securing stable housing and 8 guests obtaining employment. One guest never had a primary care physician until the McKenna Center connected him with one.**

Hope Begins Here: Lives Changed



- 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. McKenna Center staff arranged for him to get a mental health evaluation where he was diagnosed for PTSD and received treatment.
- A 38-year-old guest is living independently in a single occupancy room. With the McKenna Center’s help and support, he secured a construction job and saved 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 after participating in the Hypothermia Transition Program.

- A 59-year-old man who had struggled with alcoholism for many years is now living with a sober relative and working after we facilitated outpatient treatment for him, and he started attending AA meetings.
- A young man experienced homelessness after fleeing violence in his family's home. McKenna Center staff connected him to a training program and housing, and he is now working at the Washington Hospital Center as a medical technician.

Special Services



- The McKenna Center gave away hundreds of turkeys at Thanksgiving and chickens and hams at Christmas to Food Pantry shoppers.
- Byte Back conducted an 18-hour Computer Foundations 1 curriculum in the McKenna Center's computer lab.
- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity members hosted Commander's game watch parties at the McKenna Center. The men relaxed, enjoyed the company of others, and ate a meal prepared by fraternity members.
- Through a partnership with Catholic Charities, guests received income tax preparation assistance.

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