



The Father McKenna Center Spring 2025 Newsletter

Continuing Fr. McKenna's Ministry of Presence



Dear Friends,

Happy Easter! This Spring has brought uncertainty and worry into many of our lives, and I hope that you are able to join me in rejoicing as we celebrate Christ's resurrection. Throughout Lent, our team at the McKenna Center has been reflecting on how we can best accompany our neighbors in need as they continue their journeys to find stability and reclaim their lives, guided by Pope Francis' call to "journey together in hope." This reflection has highlighted our community's lack of additional support, and we have spent some time discerning how we can best expand our services to meet the increased level of need facing our guests.

A Saturday service expansion addresses requests we've heard from our three largest groups of stakeholders: Day Shelter guests, Food Pantry patrons, and you!

Day Shelter guests view the Center as a sanctuary of calm and safety, and they are always looking for opportunities to spend more time inside.

Food Pantry patrons who work traditional hours struggle to make our current 1:30-2:30pm weekday shopping hours.

Community members with busy work-week schedules are looking for increased weekend opportunities to volunteer.



With these three asks in mind, we believe opening our doors on Saturday mornings is the best way to further our support of our neighbors while also providing community members like you with more opportunities to become involved in our work. On behalf of our clients, our staff, and our volunteers, I thank you for your generous support of the Center as we work towards this goal.

With thanks,
Dennis Dee, Executive Director

Hypothermia Transition Program

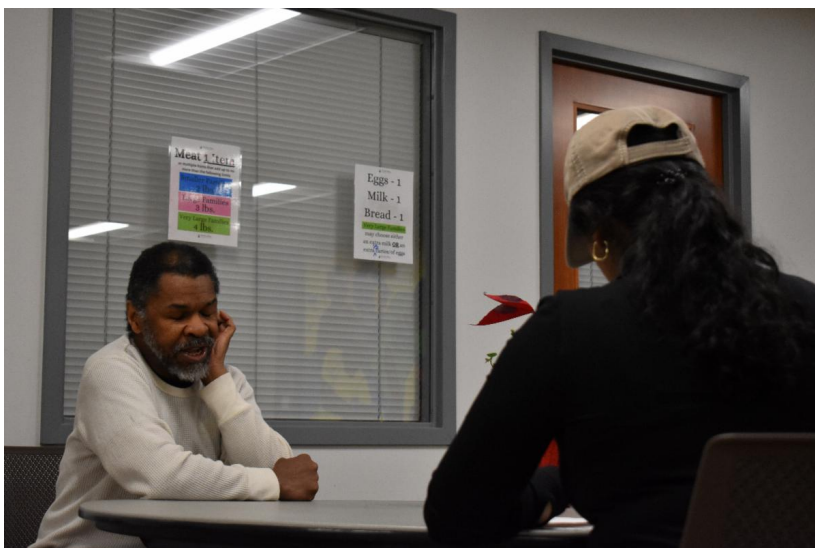
Short Term Stay, Long Term Progress

On November 1st, 2024, our 2024–2025 Hypothermia Transition Program kicked off, with 10 men spending the night at the Center. 5 months later, on March 31st, we welcomed the men in for their last night with us, ending this year's iteration of one of our most impactful programs!



This year, we welcomed 15 men into the Center through the Hypothermia Transition Program, with some 'graduating' early and others joining mid-season. This year's program was incredibly successful, with multiple men securing housing and/or employment. This success would not be possible without the dedicated support of our community, and of the Gonzaga Mother's Club, who organizes volunteers to serve hot, home-cooked dinners for every night over the 5-month program.

Here are a few of our favorite memories from this year, along with information about what's next for this year's participants!



Wilson M. successfully completed his work permit application, and is working closely with the McKenna Center case management team to secure part- or full-time employment.

James W. secured employment, and is preparing to move into transitional housing.

One participant secured employment as a driver and will be moving into a work-bed program in the coming days.

Vernon E., who has been supporting the Hypothermia Program as the program's housekeeper, secured temporary work through Instawork. Additionally, He will be receiving HVAC training this month through So Others Might Eat's Center for Employment Training!



Gibran K., who was highlighted in our February Newsletter, secured work as a bartender and has completed his move into transitional housing.

Two other participants found jobs, with one moving into a rental property this month, and the other preparing to enter a transitional housing program.

Marius F. has secured full-time employment as a custodian at Georgetown University's Donovan Hall, and has moved into the Emory work-bed program.

The McKenna Center Board served dinner to and ate with our Hypothermia guests twice this year – connecting them with the clients and providing time for meaningful reflection on their continued work for the Center.

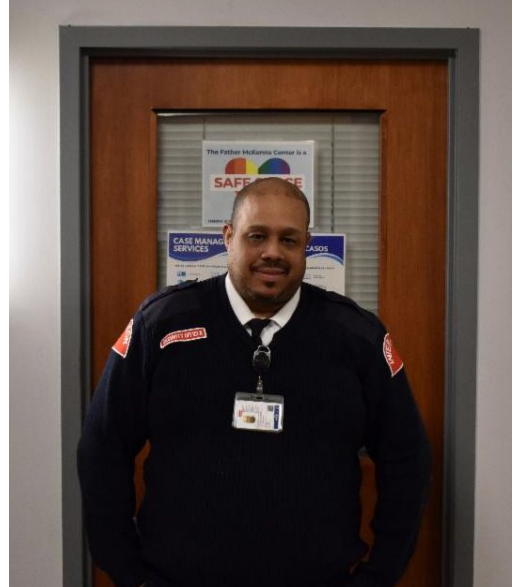


Staff Spotlight

Gabriel Rosado

At the beginning of March, we welcomed a new Security Guard, Gabriel, to our McKenna Center

team! Gabriel, who grew up in Puerto Rico, speaks both English and Spanish fluently – enhancing our ability to support our Spanish-speaking guests. Gabriel supports our front desk staff when clients are coming in to our Day Shelter and Food Pantry programs, and helps let volunteers into the building throughout the day.



“Gabriel’s warm and welcoming presence has quickly become a fixture of our core programs. I couldn’t be happier to have him join our team, helping us traverse a difficult language barrier and enabling us to better meet the needs of some of our guests.” – Dennis Dee.

“I’ve deeply enjoyed my first couple weeks at the McKenna Center” says Gabriel. “Supporting the work and mission of the Center while quickly building relationships with the clients, volunteers, and staff has been a great experience. I’m excited to continue working with this team and keep helping the Center serve its clients, especially our Spanish-speaking ones.”

REMINDER: Fr. Horace McKenna Memorial Mass

May 11th • St. Aloysius Church • 900 N. Capitol St NW, DC • 2:00 PM



Don’t forget to mark your calendars and plan to join us for a memorial mass celebrating the life of our saint, Fr. Horace McKenna, on May 11th, the 43rd anniversary of his death. Gonzaga President and FMC Board Member Fr. Joseph Ligan, SJ will be presiding, with The Georgetown Chimes serving as the choir.

Light refreshments will follow in the McKenna Center. Don’t miss this great opportunity to catch up with Center staff, learn more about our current programming options, and spend some time in our beautiful space – including the recently constructed Capital Campaign donor recognition wall!

We look forward to seeing you at 2pm on Sunday, May 11th

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