



Slow Miracles

*"We must speak to them with our hands, before we try to speak to them with our lips."
Saint Peter Claver, SJ*

2007 In Review

When the Father McKenna Center was founded nearly 25 years ago, Father Horace probably never imagined the wealth of support that the Center would eventually garner from the surrounding community. What started as a labor of love for one priest, who had nothing to give sometimes, literally, but the clothes on his back, has grown into an agency that serves over 2000 men, women and families every year.

The services we provide – respite from the cold in our daytime drop-in shelter, emergency overnight shelter on nights where the temperatures dip below freezing, and the various food, material and financial support we provide to people in need – would not be possible without the support of caring people like you whose prayers and support we count on each day.

We wish to extend a very special thank you to the Gonzaga Mother's Club and the various foundations and individuals who have helped directly and through partnering with the McKenna Center. The strong show of support we received last year helped us to keep up with the growing number of men, women and families who needed our help and also helped us to expand our services so that once these families are in our sights, we can begin to help them break the chain of poverty and make a better life for themselves. God Bless each of you for your support and for continuing to help us reach out to the poor and marginalized in Washington, D.C.

Inside this issue:

Year In Review	1
HIV/AIDs Initiative	1
Foundations, Parishes and Organizations	2
Mary Ann Wilding	2
Reflection	2
Easter Message	3
Director's Note	4

HIV/AIDs Initiative

The Father McKenna Center has been chosen to partner with the HIV/AIDS Administration of the District of Columbia's Department of Health and Howard University's Center for Urban Progress to launch a HIV/AIDS Drop-In Center. The goal of the program is to build capacity at the center to help raise awareness and offer referral service to the men and women who seek services here. The Father McKenna Center has begun offering tailored messages focusing on nutrition, spiritual, emotional and physical health as a method of HIV prevention during the 11:00 am daily meeting. HIV service providers, ministers and People Living With AIDS (PWAs) have been featured speakers. Free HIV testing and counseling is being offered through partnership with the Carl Vogel Center.

The Father McKenna Center is rapidly developing partnerships with HIV service organizations to develop best practices to serve the vulnerable populations that enter the doors. Carl Vogel Center, Unity Health Care and Howard University Hospital are offering or soon to be offering HIV testing and counseling services to men and women at the center. The Center has developed a library of films with an HIV theme to broadcast during the morning groups. On March 24th, the guests of the Center were treated to an especially nutritious meal along with a discussion of the value of proper nutrition when living with HIV, or other chronic diseases. Several guest ministers shared the value of self-love to the men as a continued message of strength and faith as a method of prevention and support. Unity Health Care's Project Orion will soon be visiting the site bi-weekly to offer comprehensive clinic care to the guests. Even youth, who enter the center will be handled in partnership with Sasha Bruce Youthworks.

The Center has now been trained to be a point of entry for any one who is HIV infected and needs to apply for free HIV medication through the District of Columbia's AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP). For more information please contact the center and ask for the HIV site coordinator..

Church Bulletin Faux Pas

Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM – prayer and meditation to follow.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music to follow.



Foundation and Parish Recognition

The following foundations, parishes and organizations are invaluable partners helping us to fulfill our mission. We are taking this time to list and thank them.

William S. Abell Foundation
Philip L. Graham Fund
Rapoport Family Foundation
Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities
W. O'Neil Foundation
Clark-Winchcole Foundation
Marpat Foundation
Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation
Humanitas Foundation
Mary Catherine Kilday &

George W Malzone Foundation
Spring Creek Foundation
Jesuit Community of Gonzaga College High School
Gonzaga College High School
Mothers and Fathers Clubs, Gonzaga College High School
Holy Trinity Church, Washington DC
Holy Trinity School
Saint Rose of Lima, Gaithersburg, MD
Saint Mary's of Sorrows, Fairfax, VA
Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament
St. Raphael Catholic Community
St. Columba's 5th Grade

Assumption Alumnae Association
St. John the Baptist, Silver Spring MD
St. Anthony's, Washington, DC
Holy Cross, Garrett, MD
St. Agnes, Arlington, VA
St. Matthias Church, Lanham MD
St. John Vianny, Prince Frederick, MD
St. Raymond of Penafort, Fairfax, VA
Our Lady of Victory, Washington, DC
St. Vincent de Paul, St. Jane de Chantal
Saint Therese, NC
Newman Catholic Student Center
Saint Aloysius, Washington,

DC
St. Ignatius, Baltimore, MD
Georgetown Jesuit Community
Loyola College Jesuit Community, Baltimore, MD
Loyola High School Jesuit Community, Baltimore, MD
Boston College Jesuit Community
Leonard Neale House, Washington, DC
Scranton Prep, Scranton, PA
St. Peter's Prep, Jersey City, NJ
Ferdinand Wheeler House, Baltimore MD

Feinstein Challenge 2008

Once again we are fighting hunger by participating in the annual \$ 1 million challenge. All monies we receive between March and April 2008 enable us to participate in this worthy program.

In Memoriam

Excerpted from the Memorial Mass Letter by Tom Howarth

Mary Ann Wilding was a radical lover and she made better lovers of us all. Mary Ann wouldn't step on an ant. She would take it outside and give the ant its freedom and life.

She washed the feet of the poor. I saw her do it. Her faith was a faith in action. A man came to the door of the McKenna Center and said his feet hurt. He might not have ever known his father, but his feet hurt. He might feel angry having to ask for assistance, but his feet hurt. He might be poor and suffering the pangs of discrimination. But his feet hurt. Mary Ann, loving nurse that she was, had a compassion for the man. She knelt, and then she washed and nursed his feet.

I learned of Mary Ann's death while in the hospital, recovering from double bypass surgery. I was sad to hear the terrible news, but also confident. Our loving God clearly told us that the love and compassion we give to others will be returned a hundred-fold. I find joy knowing that Mary Ann is in the arms of her loving God.

We do not know the day or the hour when our lives will end, but we can be certain that dying is part of living. It was for Jesus, and for Mary Ann, and so it will be for us. We would do well to do as Mary Ann did, and love as much as possible, as fully as possible, before our time comes.

What Mary Ann wanted was for love to triumph over poverty and neglect. That's why she came here. We had many debates over whether to have a 'sleeping room.' We have one now because of her. You see, our decisions had to pass the "Mary Ann Test." If I couldn't explain a decision to her, then I made another, more loving decision.

Mary Ann knew many hurting people come to the McKenna Center. She wanted life for you.





In Memoriam (cont)

She wanted you not to need our services. She wanted you to have a home of your own, a sense of dignity, and self-esteem. She started washing feet, but her agenda was so much larger than that. Let us honor her by loving each other, always assuming the best of each other. Let us put aside violence to ourselves and to others.

We can do this. We too can be radical lovers. Rest in peace, faithful servant, dear Mary Ann. ~ Tom

Did you know that you can help support the McKenna Center and it's programs even after death? By naming the McKenna Center as a beneficiary in your will, you can leave behind a lasting legacy of helping the poor by providing financial and/or material needs that will support our programs well into the future.

There are a number of ways to help and your estate attorney will be able to help you determine which is best for you. If you would like some examples, please contact Tom Howarth on 202-842-1112 or by e-mail at tomhowarth@fathermckennacenter.org.

Easter Message

Easter is more than a season or a day. The miracle of Christ's resurrection is the reason for our faith and our hope.

At the Father McKenna Center, the spirit of resurrection and rebirth is continuous. Each day, our mission is to provide love, compassion and hope to men who have suffered much in poverty and substance abuse and died to this world. We pray that through our actions, they will choose to begin life anew, resurrected in the mercy of Jesus Christ.

By welcoming men who have forgotten what it means to be truly human after years of being societal outcasts, we provide the love and compassion that Fr. Horace McKenna knew was absolutely necessary if healing was ever to take place.

While we cannot claim to save every man who comes through our door, we do know that many men begin their path toward new life after simply joining us for a cup of coffee, a hot lunch, or coming in to escape the cold or heat.

As we leave behind the Easter season and enter Ordinary Time, the spirit of resurrection will continue to be present every day at the McKenna Center. Christ told us that the poor will always be with us. We are thankful that we are a small part of Christ's plan for their care and salvation

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

James Baldwin



STAFF

- Tom Howarth
Director
- Gary Hines
Associate Director
- Ron Rogers
Facilities Manager
- Virginia Jenkins
Reception
- Henry Anderson
Staff
- John Mead
Dep. Facilities Manager
- Gary Smith
Staff
- Cathie Conway-
Controller
- Mary Ann Wilding, RN
Ignation Volunteer
- Joan Kelly, RN
Ignation Volunteer
- Ed Mullan
Ignation Volunteer
- Tyler Przybylek
Ignation Volunteer

The McKenna Center Needs & Wish List

Men's Clothing

Jeans
Sleeping Bags
New Underwear & Socks
Plastic Rain Gear
Sneakers & Boots, sizes 10 thru 12
Caps

Personal Care Items

Deodorant, Razors, Soap & Shampoo
Toothpaste & Toothbrushes
Hair care products
New Wash Cloths
New Towels & Sheets
1 gallon size Zip Lock Bags
Baby Powder
Lotion/ Vaseline
Laundry Detergent

Kitchen Needs

Pasta & Spaghetti Sauce
Canned Meats
Box Cereals & Instant Oatmeal
Cooking Oil
Oven Mitts, Steel Wool & Cleaning Supplies
Measuring Spoons

Urgent Kitchen Needs

16 Qt Pots
12 to 16 in. Frying Pans
Large Water Dispensing Coolers
Large Commercial Pots & Pans
Commercial Ice Machine



Our Staff

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Slow Miracles



**From the Desk of the
Director**

I'm writing this note on March 19. I've been told that I need heart bypass surgery on Easter Monday, March 24. I'll be away from the McKenna Center for a while. Please pray for me and the staff of the McKenna Center and those we serve. God willing, I'll be back in a few weeks.

All of you who have been so generous in your support of our work are vitally important to the Father McKenna Center. We also have a couple of rather special groups. One is the "McKenna Family", a group of faithful folks who knew Father McKenna and gather on the 2nd Thursday of each month for mass, sharing information, fundraising and breaking bread. The other group is what we call our "Board of Advisors". These are folks who have demonstrated an interest in helping us sustain our programs.

I tell these rather special groups that what they get for helping us is the good, the bad and the ugly about life at the McKenna Center. I let them know about what our challenges are, what our successes have been and about our failures. In this writing, I'd like to share some of our realities with you.

March is a three-ring circus at the McKenna Center. It is still cold at night so our hypothermia prevention program is in operation. We decided this year to put an end to the confusion of when a hypother-

mia alert had been declared and when it had not. In November 2007, we had eight nights when a hypothermia alert was declared by the city. Normally, we'd get a call that it was too cold out for people to sleep on the streets and that meant we would be open that particular night. We would scramble to get a coordinator in place for that night and we'd be open.

One night, there were two people that I knew rather well waiting outside our door in the hope of sleeping in the McKenna Center. It was not that cold at 6 PM and we had not gotten a call. I told the guys that there was no hypothermia that night. They took the news graciously and began to walk away but I stopped them and asked where they would sleep that night. One man said he knew a rather deep doorway on H Street and he'd go there. The other fellow said he would walk to the shelter on New York Avenue quite a distance from Saint Aloysius. I arranged to have them stay at the McKenna Center that night. Shortly thereafter, we declared that our hypothermia shelter would be open until April 1, 2008 regardless of the weather. So, until April 1 we will have about 26 regular guests each night. Clearly it costs more but it is kinder to the homeless.

The second ring of the circus is composed of the delegations of college students who come here instead of going on vacation from school. It was so moving yesterday to hear a

young woman from the University of Wyoming tell of her emotional experience on the street when a poor homeless person gave her a dollar while many other more wealthy people passed her by. I've heard that more than once.

The final ring of the circus is our night shelter, a program that has been in formation since I came to the McKenna Center as director in February 2005. My first experience of the McKenna Center and Saint Aloysius was as a night shelter volunteer many years ago. I've learned a lot from my experience with the night shelter both in terms of managing a program and the nature of the problems that arise serving the homeless.

I have learned that addictions are demons on a par with those described by Jesus in the Gospel. You might recall his saying, "This kind can only be removed by prayer and fasting". Well, those are the kinds of demons that are in control of too many of the people we see.

In dealing with people with addictions, I've learned that the battle with the demons is never really over. Declaring victory is perhaps too ambitious. I have had men here who I came to consider exemplary people disserving of my trust and yet the day comes when they simply disappear only to be found to have relapsed. I find that hard to take and hard to understand. Please pray for those who are addicted. It is a terrible disease.

About the Father McKenna Center:

The Father McKenna Center was established in 1983 to carry on the legacy of Fr. Horace McKenna, the saintly Jesuit priest who served at St. Aloysius parish from 1962 until his death in 1982 and maintained a heroic apostolate to the poor of inner city Washington. The Center today continues to meet his concern for the homeless and poor of our part of this city, the North Capitol street area of downtown Washington, by some accounts the poorest area of town.

The Center serves the area by operating a daytime Drop-In Center for homeless men, one of two such facilities in downtown Washington. We offer our guests assistance with showers, laundry, telephone and local transportation, as well as referrals for a wide array of basic services to meet medical, employment and other personal needs. We assist over 100 men a day with these programs. Our Transitional Shelter program will assist a dozen men each year in learning to regain life and work skills. In addition, we respond to hypothermia alerts each winter by offering overnight relief from the cold to up to 25 men, who are otherwise extremely vulnerable to winter weather. Our outreach to households in our community includes provision of rent and utility assistance to scores of households each year, as well as the emergency food program, which assists two hundred fifty families annually, by providing a food bag each month.

Another terrible disease that is associated with poverty and addictions is HIV and AIDS. We are in the last of a three-month project, which we hope will continue with Howard University's Center for Urban Progress to try and make a dent in Washington's HIV/AIDS epidemic. Nationally the rate of new reports of AIDS is 14 per 100,000 population while in the District it is 128.4 cases per 100,000. Black residents account for 57% of the DC population but account for 81% of new HIV cases. Black women constitute 58% of the District's female population but account for 90% of female HIV cases. People who are uninsured are less likely to get tested and late testing in the reason so many HIV infections progress to AIDS. I have no doubt that if Father McKenna was among us with his passionate interest for the poor and particularly the black poor he would be fully engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

We have devoted considerable time to educating those we serve about HIV/AIDS and the need to be tested. If they test positive, we try to help them understand that HIV is no longer a death sentence and drugs can be gotten free of charge. We have much work to do in this area but we have made a beginning.

Thank you for all you have done to support our work. We are honored to be considered worthy of your support.