



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R I N C



MEETING NEEDS . . . RECLAIMING LIVES

Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference

Inside this Issue

- Pg 2 Meet the Team
- Pg 3 Volunteer Spotlight
- Pg 3 Guest Spotlight
- Pg 3 FMC Launches Food Coop
- Pg 4 President's Notes

Check it out, soon!

We are in the process of revising our webpage:
www.fathermckennacenter.org



Board of Directors

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- Kevin Curtin, Treasurer
- Lisa Ryan, Secretary
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- Geoffrey Brown
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June 2014 Edition

Tom Howarth Retires

Tom Howarth, the President of the Father McKenna Center has decided to retire after a nine year run at the Center.

Hired by Father Bill Gavin, then pastor of St. Aloysius Parish, Tom has led the Father McKenna Center through nine years of growth and great change.



Internal Revenue Service for designation as a non-profit organization able to accept charitable contributions.

Tom was instrumental in establishing great relationships with key foundations and major donors who supported the work of the

Center. In 2013 the Center raised more than \$900,000 in cash contributions and grants and nearly \$500,000 more in in-kind gifts and support.

But Tom's passion was always to better serve the homeless men and very low income families who count on the Father McKenna Center. Tom made it a point to know the men and spend time with them regularly. Tom always said, "we are called to be the hands and voices of Fr. McKenna today, by our compassion and our service." Tom always took his leadership in the tradition of Fr. Horace McKenna as a sacred trust and a call to serve others with great love.

When Tom arrived at the Father McKenna Center the budget was about \$350,000, and it has grown to nearly \$1.2M. But the big change at the Father McKenna Center came in 2012.

The Archdiocese of Washington determined that St. Aloysius would close in June 2012. But what about the Center? It was officially a ministry of the parish, but discernment by Tom, the Gonzaga community and the Board of Advisors led to a decision to establish the Center as an independent nonprofit agency.

There were loads of new requirements created by the new structure. The Board of Advisors became the Board of Directors, with ultimate responsibility for the Center and its mission and work. The Center had to create a set of By-Laws, apply to the District of Columbia to be recognized as a nonprofit corporation and apply to the

Mark Ruge, Board chair commented, "Tom has served the men and families well for nine years, and has been the biggest asset of the Father McKenna Center. He has laid the foundation for us to go to the next step. He will be missed by everyone here."

Looking Ahead: The Future of The Father McKenna Center

by Ed Orzechowski, Acting President

Every organization faces key moments of change on the path to fulfill its mission, and the Fr. McKenna Center is at such a juncture. While the retirement of Tom Howarth as President of the Center came sooner than many people had hoped, it is a reality that the Board and staff face with confidence in the future of the Center's work and spirit. Tom's dedication and vision left an indelible legacy of love and compassion, all in the spirit of Fr. Horace McKenna, which will last long into the future.

I am honored and privileged to serve as the interim president of such a fine organization. Over these past several weeks I have witnessed the remarkable commitment, competence and genuine care of the Board and staff for those guests who come through our doors day in and day out. The small, intimate and individualized support our guests receive is a tribute to the many volunteers, staff and supporters who engage in this critically important work for those who need them most.

There is no doubt in my mind that the future of the Fr. McKenna Center is strong. The devotion of Gonzaga College High School to this ministry is a testament to its commitment to social justice, and building "men for others." There is no other high school in this country that supports a ministry such as the McKenna Center, and without them, there would be no McKenna Center. From the in-kind support of free rent and utilities, to the daily meals of the Gonzaga Mothers' Club during hypothermia season, to the students volunteering to serve meals, Gonzaga provides support unequalled by any school in the city.

When one considers that this work continues entirely through the in-kind contribution of Gonzaga College High School, the remarkable support of many generous donors, the consistent help of committed foundations, and the continued engagement of many volunteers, one cannot help but see that the McKenna Center's future is bright and hope-filled.

During this transition time, the work and development of the Center continues. Technology improvements are being made, administrative efficiencies and cost-saving efforts are being implemented, a development professional is now on staff, and most importantly, the individualized support of our guests has been increased with the



addition of a full time social worker. Yet the need continues. In just the past four months, we have seen an eight percent increase in the number of those we serve over the same period last year.

Certainly, the Board of Directors is now focused on recruiting a new leader for the Center who will continue the quality ministry to

those who are homeless and the very low-income families we serve, and serve as their strong advocate and mentor. We are all fully confident that the new leader will continue the legacy of Fr. Horace McKenna, as well as that of Tom Howarth.

Please pray for us as we continue this vital work, and look for the new leader who will take up the task of feeding those who are hungry, clothing those without, and housing those in need of shelter, all while helping them fulfill their greatest potential...one person at a time.

Father McKenna Center Wish List

The Father McKenna Center relies on the generous support of the community to provide our services to the homeless and very low income families who seek our assistance. Below is a partial list of items you can donate to assist us. For more information, please visit our website:

www.fathermckennacenter.org

Food Items

Canned Fruit
Canned Vegetables
Cereal Rice Pasta
Canned Tomatoes / Sauce
Canned Tuna and Chicken
Meal Packets
(e.g. Hamburger Helper)

To make a donation, please call FMC (202-842-1112) to alert us that you are coming. Please try to come after 3:00 PM (so Gonzaga is not in session), and park near the Marian Statue at 19 Eye St NW. We will assist you.

Clothing

Our primary need is for men's clothing, although we are happy to have women's clothing on hand to assist women who need our assistance.

With summer weather, we are in need of:
Summer shirts
T-shirts
Slacks
Underwear (new, please)
Socks (particularly white)
Light jackets
Shoes

Volunteer Spotlight

Ted Tschudy



For the past several years each Wednesday morning has found Ted Tschudy at the Father McKenna Center, serving breakfast and helping in myriad ways as we work to serve the homeless men in the Day Drop-In Shelter.

Ted is an organizational consultant and a teacher by profession. He was an adjunct professor at American University for many years and has assisted many small and large organizations achieve their goals through his support and guidance.

At the McKenna Center Ted led an effort in the summer of 2013 to survey the guests and clients who rely on the Center through a series of focus groups that has solidified the information that the McKenna Center has on the needs and satisfaction of those who seek our services.

Ted and his wife, Mary, are active parishioners at Holy Trinity Parish in Georgetown.

We are very grateful that Ted chooses to spend his Wednesdays with us, and so are the men we serve!



Guest Profile

William Marshall

Last November William Marshall was a man who needed a lot of support. He chose to enter the Father McKenna Center Hypothermia Shelter, that would provide him a place to stay for five months and allow him to focus on making changes in his life. He followed the path to success that the staff of the Father McKenna Center helped him to identify.

Today William is working as an IT technician at Fannie Mae and has made significant progress toward his personal life goals that he set during the Hypothermia Shelter program.

“Being a part of the Hypothermia Shelter gave me the confidence to reach for my dreams,” said Marshall.

Michael Johnson, the Hypothermia Shelter coordinator, reflected, “From Day 1 William was a leader among his peers in the shelter, demonstrating a work ethic, a willingness to pitch in and help where needed and a resilience that will stand him in good stead in the future. And he reached out to others in the same position as he was and mentored others to their own success. William was a real asset in the program. We are really proud of the progress he is making.”

The Father McKenna Center Food Cooperative

During the fall of 2013 Tom Howarth was challenged by a book he read, entitled *Toxic Charity* by Robert Lupton, an Atlanta-based community organizer and critic of programs that entitle the poor without empowering the poor.

After prayer and reflection, Tom turned to the McKenna Center staff and asked for their reflection on how the Food Pantry program might empower the patrons. His vision was to allow those who use the Pantry to have a say in its operation and in what items they took home for their families.

In March we launched the Food Coop, where local families make a \$3.00 per month contribution to sustain the Coop, and they can come to shop for groceries three



times per month (as opposed to two visits per month previously). While many patrons have chosen to stay with the two visits per month program (and not pay into the Coop), we are seeing more and more people choosing to become a part of the Coop. The Coop will continue to empower the patrons to help us

make available the food they want and to offer new programs, like diapers and baby food to assist young single mothers and some of the grandmothers who are raising their grandchildren.

The Coop is a new way of serving the very poor families who count on us, but this new approach is something we believe will better serve those families and others who hear about our quality programs.

A farewell reflection from

Tom Howarth, former FMC President

All good things come to an end and so it is that my tenure as director of the Father McKenna Center will come to an end on July 1, 2014. My commitment to the poor and homeless and my activities to bring about a more just world will not end. I am in a period of prayer to discern what God wants from me in the future.

Words cannot express my gratitude for all the people who have supported the Father McKenna Center during its 31 years of service to the poor and homeless. I am of course especially grateful for the many staff, individuals, foundations, parishes, colleges and high schools who have shared their gifts with us over the last nine years and four months.

A lot changed over the last nine plus years. In 2005, when I became director, our assistance to those facing evictions or utility cutoffs stood at \$1,000 each month or \$12,000 over the course of one year. In the 2014 budget, we have included \$70,000 to help people stay in their homes, have electricity to run a fan in the hot summer and heat in the cold winter. We no longer provide this service through an impersonal phone call. We meet with an applicant and recommend steps that they can take to avoid the next crisis.

In Fiscal Year 2006, our total expenditures were \$328,000. In 2014, our expenditures could be about \$680,000. What does that number mean? It means more and better services for the poor and homeless. It means that better food is served at breakfast and lunch. It means we serve more meat, poultry and fish instead of hot dogs and fish sticks. It means that our employees are paid well above the city's minimum wage with benefits that include a pension. It means that there is a greater variety of food available for our Food Pantry clients and that the food is provided with concern for the dignity of the recipients. It means that our hypothermia shelter is open every night from November 1 to April 1 whether it is 70 or 7 degrees outside.

The Father McKenna Center has striven to be different than other service centers. We came to understand that we could not treat the homeless as a faceless mass of people lined up for some service. To truly serve the homeless we needed to know a man's name, whether he knew his father and the state of his physical and mental health. We needed to know where he sleeps at night. We came to understand that how we provided a service was at least as important as the service itself. We moved from a betterment model to a development model.



In a city that expects little if anything from the homeless, we expected the poor and homeless to be all that they could be.

The Father McKenna Center decided that it would not be a noble failure. It would have been easier to simply hand out clothing and serve meals. Our efforts would be applauded. What nice people we were to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. But if we asked more of the poor and homeless, it was only fair that we ask more of ourselves. Development of the

whole person takes more time, is more complicated and costs more than simply providing a service. But, you have to be open to what you hear even when it is painful and challenging.

I've watched the movie, *The Mission*, many times. In one scene, a man talks to the Cardinal, sent to determine the fate of the missions and the Jesuit priests who work with the Indians, about the competitive nature of the missions with their European colonizers. The European tells the Cardinal that it is too bad that the missions were not a "noble failure." As he said, "We can always accept a noble failure."

The Father McKenna Center decided not to be a noble failure not because it was easier for us but because it was better for those we serve.

There are so many people to thank. The Gonzaga Mothers Club never received a request from us that they did not respond to immediately. Our Jesuit volunteers lent their expertise and, more importantly their spirit to our work. We saw high school and college students take a hard look at their futures after encountering the poor. We would not have a new kitchen had it not been for the work of Patty Tobin and Craig Houston and many other donors.

I must thank Peter. I would like to thank God for not allowing me to walk away from Peter when he sat in a windowsill on G Street shivering in the cold. We reached out a hand in love to Peter and he grasped it. He came among us and blessed our efforts. As he began to see himself in a new light, we basked in its glow. He told us he liked and trusted us.

Since my first trip to El Salvador in 1991, I've come to understand God's "preferential option for the poor." It is not a choice for us because love of the poor is the very nature of God. So God has a preferential option for the poor and so should we.

Blessings.!

Tom Howarth