



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R I N C



MEETING NEEDS . . . RECLAIMING LIVES

Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference

2013 - A Pivotal Year at the Father McKenna Center

There are times in all our lives when we recognize that a month or a year was pivotal in our journey on this earth.

2013 was such a year for the Father McKenna Center. 2013 marked the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Father McKenna Center by St. Aloysius Parish to carry on the good work and the legacy of Father Horace B. McKenna, SJ, Washington’s “priest to the poor.”

And 2013 was also the first year of the “new” Father McKenna Center. In 2012 the Archdiocese of Washington announced the closing of St. Aloysius Parish. With that announcement the future of the Father McKenna Center stood in the balance. The Board of Advisors, with Gonzaga College High School’s support, determined that the Center would become an independent nonprofit agency continuing the vital mission of serving the poor and homeless.

During 2013 we saw continued demand for our services. Each of our four programs continued to meet a vital need in the community. **The Day Drop-In** program saw more than 22,000 visits and served more than 9,000 Midday Meals.

The Hypothermia Shelter (open November 1 through March 31) provided a warm cot for an average of 14 men each night in November and December 2013.

The Food Pantry received more than 2,250 visits from very low income families in the neighborhoods of Ward 6, helping to provide more than 24,000 meals to those families.

The Rent and Utility Assistance Program assisted 210 families stay in their homes with more than \$60,000 in aid. There was significantly more demand than we could meet.

During 2013 the Father McKenna Center set new records for contributions and to the levels of service we provided. It was indeed a pivotal year for the McKenna Center, and we hope that you will continue to support our efforts to help the homeless men and low income families we serve every day.

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7th Annual Jigs, Reels & Songs for the Homeless



On Sunday February 23, 2014 the Father McKenna Center hosted the 7th Annual Jigs, Reels & Songs for the Homeless, through the support of Alice McDermott, Mitch Flannery and the Culkin School of Dance.

The list of performers included Lilt, the Bog Band and the Men of Eye Street (a choir of Gonzaga students under the direction of Jeremy Young).

The highlight of the show was the appearance of Gov. Martin O'Malley as a soloist.

The event raised \$4,500 to support the programs of the Father McKenna Center. We hope you can join us for next year's event!



A Week of Service - Students from Marquette University spent Spring Break helping out at the Father McKenna Center. We also had students from Canisius HS, Xavier, Vanderbilt, Scranton Univ., Univ. of Connecticut, DePaul and Univ. of Wisconsin at Oshkosh. Thank you!



Pat and Don Kisicki - *Volunteers Extraordinaire*

One of the best things about the Father McKenna Center is the many dedicated women and men who volunteer to assist our small staff.

Pat and Don Kisicki are two of our most regular volunteers. They are part of the Ignatian Lay Volunteer Corps, a Jesuit inspired group of mature women and men who volunteer to serve the needs of the community in a variety of agencies. Pat and Don bless the FMC with their dedication and service.

Don has become our principal volunteer in the kitchen, assisting FMC's cook, Raymond Derr, to prepare breakfast and lunch. He has brought a desire to serve new and exciting menus.

Pat fills many roles at the Center. She is a nurse by training and takes blood pressure for our guests, helps in the food pantry, supports the office staff. In addition, Pat and Deborah Vazirani, a Gonzaga mom serve as our Volunteer Coordinators, helping schedule other volunteers and the groups of youth who come for a week of service.

Pat and Don have been married for more than 40 years, have three adult children, two grandchildren (so far) and live in Olney.

Thank you, Pat and Don for your loving service to the Father McKenna Center and our guests and program participants.

Guest Profile

Steven Christian Walls - *Artist and Veteran*

Steven Christian Walls is a 41 year old artist, originally from New York. He has lived in DC since 2002, and has struggled to make a living as an artist. Last fall he lost his apartment in Southeast, and found temporary housing in a building near the Father McKenna Center where he is the part-time handyman in exchange for a place to sleep that is off the streets.



Steven Christian wants to return to apartment living – someplace large enough for him to live and to work as an artist. He is a graphic designer/illustrator but also dabbles in drawing and painting as artforms. Steven Christian served in the US Navy during Desert Storm.

He tells us that the Father McKenna Center provides him with comradery, a place where he is called to focus on his dream. “I really appreciate it that I can make the business calls I need to make to try to find work, and I can get clothing that will allow me to go for an interview and look presentable. (Steven Christian has been a fashion model in the past and is particular about how he looks and carries himself.)

“In the end I am really glad that the Father McKenna Center has allowed me to give back to them – I help out a little with setting up the dining room for lunch and then a little with the clean-up. It makes me feel that I am not just receiving, but that I am able to give back, too.”

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

The Impact of a Gift to the Father McKenna Center

So, you make a gift to support the Father McKenna Center! Wonderful! But what impact does a gift have?

\$25.00 helps us provide groceries for 5 families through the Food Pantry / Coop.

\$100.00 provides a Noon Meal for 50 men in the Day Drop-In program.

\$500.00 provides a warm, safe bed for 15 men for a week in the Hypothermia Shelter.

\$1,000.00 provides rental assistance to two low income families at risk of losing their housing.

Nearly 80% of each dollar contributed goes directly to programs that help the homeless and very low income families we serve. Thank you for considering a gift to the Father McKenna Center.

A note from the desk of

Tom Howarth, FMC President

What does it feel like to work at the Father McKenna Center? It feels like mixed emotions.

Soon it will be April 1. The hypothermia prevention program will come to an end and the baseball season will start. The Nationals have already provided 10 tickets to 3 games! Hopefully, it won't snow any more. Tax and allergy season will be upon us.

There is a lot to like about April, but what about Peter?

I'd seen him at the Wednesday evening PeaceMeal but never in the McKenna Center Drop-In program.

A few months ago I was on my way from the Metro deep in thought I walked by a man sitting in a deep windowsill on G Street near Union Station. I took note of the man but kept walking. As I got close to North Capitol Street, I had to stop. You might say the Gospel was upon me. I thought about the Levite who walked by the beaten man in the ditch.

I had to go back and speak to the man. I asked why he didn't come to the McKenna Center. He said he didn't know what or where it was so I explained that it was where he frequently ate an evening meal on Wednesdays. He asked what we did there and I explained our services. So, he said he would come by.

The following Monday he arrived and we learned his name is Peter. He looked bad with dirt caked on his face and dirty clothes. The food he could not get in his mouth appeared on this shirt and jacket. His fragrance was imposing and we saw not a few bugs.

Cortez McDaniel took Peter under his wing, got him some fresh clothes and provided him with a shower with the proper lice remover. At lunch, Peter looked a whole lot better.

Cortez and I spoke with Peter. He has an interesting story. He told us he was a graduate of Yale University and he had worked in the Foreign Service. He

talks like he went to Yale; we UCONN graduates are sensitive to such things.

Cortez offers haircuts on Mondays and last Monday Peter was a customer. Cortez came to my office and urged me to come down to the social hall where Peter was in the chair. It was amazing. Cortez says that Peter went in to the bathroom and stayed awhile. When he emerged he told Cortez that he had not seen himself in a very long time.

April is coming. Hypothermia season will end. Peter who said he would never come inside has been staying with us for several weeks. Now that April is here, where will Peter at age 70 go to sleep at night?

I love the song *Happy* by Farrell Williams. He proclaims that he is "happy as a room without a roof." I wonder what my homeless friends think about "a room without a roof?"

A little girl is missing from the family shelter at DC General, a dingy abandoned hospital. Bad things happen there I'm told. Staff members demand sex for an extra pillow. We say we are shocked but why? Why should we expect anything good to happen at DC General? The best we can say is that it has rooms with a roof. We need to pray for Relisha Tenau Rudd, age 8. We need to pray for Peter. And say one for me. I'm having trouble with my mixed emotions.

