



The Father McKenna

C E N T E R I N C



MEETING NEEDS . . . RECLAIMING LIVES

Slow Miracles . . . Making a Difference

October 2014 Issue of *Slow Miracles*, a newsletter from the Father McKenna Center to our donors and friends.

Inside this Issue

- Pg 2 Meet the Team
- Pg 3 Volunteer Spotlight
- Pg 3 Guest Spotlight
- Pg 3 Birthday Celebration at FMC
- Pg 4 Staff Reflection



Board of Directors

- Mark Ruge, Chairman
- Kevin Curtin, Treasurer
- Lisa Ryan, Secretary
- Rev. David Bava
- Geoffrey Brown
- William Douglass
- Ruth Hildenberger
- Walter Hill
- Harry Kettmer
- Maureen McCarty
- Gerry Nolan
- Jerry O'Neill
- Rev. Stephen Planning, SJ
- Sally Sullivan
- Peggy Still

- Kimberly Cox
President

FMC Board Appoints New President — Dr. Kimberly Cox

The Board of Directors of the Father McKenna Center has recently appointed Dr. Kimberly Cox as the new President of the Center.

Mark Ruge, the Board Chair, said, "After a thorough search for a new President to lead the Center in the coming years we are pleased to announce that Dr. Kimberly Cox will be that new President, effective November 10. We had several candidates who showed great promise, and we were very pleased to have Dr. Cox come forward. We are convinced that her background and leadership experience will serve as a basis for her to lead the Center to new heights in the years ahead."

Dr. Cox, reflecting on her appointment, said, "I see this position as a ministry, more than a job. My vision for the Center is that it continues to serve as a beacon of hope and stability for the men and families that we serve. The most important thing for me is that the



Center continues the charisma of Father McKenna."

Dr. Cox was raised in Iowa, earned a Ph.D. in Economics at Duke University, taught at UC-Irvine and served as the Executive Director of the Blind Children's Learning Center in Irvine, CA. She was board chair of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Orange, CA. For the past year she has been a consultant and grant writer here in the DC area.

"Working in the food pantry at Catholic Charities in California was one of the most formative experiences for me, because it taught me that as individuals, we are more alike than we are different from the people we serve," Dr. Cox commented.

Kim has two grown children and she is a member of Holy Trinity Parish in Georgetown.

Dr. Cox is looking forward to working with the staff and the volunteers to build upon the great service the FMC provides to the poor of DC.

The Father McKenna Center Program Staff

Men for Others Every Day

“Few but incredibly generous” are words that describe the team at the Father McKenna Center. We’d like to introduce the people who serve our guests and others who count on us every day.

Cortez McDaniel is the Center Services Manager at the FMC. Cortez runs the Men’s Day Shelter and the Hypothermia Shelter and is the primary case manager for our guests. His leadership has led the Center to respond effectively to increased demand for services in the past several years. He has worked at the Center since 2009. Cortez is a Certified Addictions Counselor who worked at Second Genesis for 5 years. Cortez was the Regional Director at Quartermaine Coffee for several years. He is a founding member of the National Homecomers Academy and is a co-founder of the DC Peace Team. He has dedicated himself to assisting men who are struggling with homelessness and addiction to rebuild their lives.

Michael Johnson is Support Services Manager and oversees the food pantry, the physical plant and the technology assets at the Father McKenna Center. He first came to the Center as the coordinator of the Hypothermia Program during the winter of 2013-14, and did such an exemplary job that when the Program closed at the end of March that he was asked to join the day program staff. Michael grew up in suburban Washington, and is a college and law school graduate. Prior to joining FMC he was program director at Make-a-Difference House. He is a board member of the National Homecomers Academy, a nonprofit committed to assisting citizens rebuild their lives and reintegrate them into society.

Raymond Derr is the kitchen coordinator for the McKenna Center. He is responsible for preparing the menu for breakfast and the Midday Meal program each day. One of the most important roles Raymond takes on at the Center is that he stands as a living example to our hundreds of guests of someone who has made good choices in his life. Raymond works hard to improve himself and the ways we serve those who count on us each



The Program Staff of the Father McKenna Center (l-r): Cortez McDaniel, Michael Johnson, Raymond Derr and Reggie Green

day.

Reggie Green is an integral part of the Day Shelter team, assisting the guests with showers, laundry and other services. Reggie provides a clear example to the men we serve through his service and compassion for our guests. Today Reggie is a single father with a 9-year old son who depends on him. He joined the

McKenna Center team in 2008.

Each day these men show the compassion and empathy of Fr. Horace McKenna, SJ to men and women in need who seek our help.

Please say a prayer for each of them - their work is vital to the success of the Father McKenna Center.

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)
Canned Soups
Cereals

To make a donation, please call FMC (202-842-1112) to alert us that you are coming. We will assist you to bring your contribution into the Center.

Clothing

Our primary need is for men’s casual clothing.

With winter weather approaching, we need:

- Casual slacks & jeans
- Shirts
- Sweaters / Sweatshirts
- Underwear (new, please)
- Socks (particularly white)
- Winter jackets
- Shoes

If you have suits and sports coats to donate, please call Strive DC at 202-484-1264

Volunteer Spotlight

Mike Conway



Each Monday morning Mike Conway arrives at the Father McKenna Center laden with pastries and rolls after visiting three bakeries to collect their “day olds.”

Mike begins each week with us at the FMC, serving breakfast and being a companion to the men we

serve.

This unassuming Arlington native and Notre Dame grad takes his faith commitment to serve the poor very seriously. He has been a volunteer at FMC for five years, and he leads an effort in his parish (Holy Trinity) to provide meals on the weekends for the homeless. He also coordinates Holy Trinity’s participation in a Hypothermia Shelter program among the churches of Georgetown.

Mike was for many years a high school counselor in Northern Virginia, and retired from Fairfax County Public Schools. Since retiring Mike has remained very active as a volunteer. He feels blessed to have the time and good health to offer his services. This past summer he made his fourth trip to Holy Trinity’s “twin” parish in Haiti, where he helped coordinate a soccer camp for the children of St. Jean Baptiste parish located on the western tip of the island.

Thank you, Mike for all you do for the poor!



Guest Profile

Kenny Mitchell

“Last winter I learned that I have CHF (congestive heart failure), and due to that I lost a job and couldn’t pay the rent,” Kenneth Mitchell recently told us. For the past seven months Kenny has been homeless, and he has become a “regular” at FMC. And he is now volunteering to help run the food pantry several days a week, assisting our patrons to select the foods they want from our “mini-grocery store” in the Pantry.

Kenny was an alcoholic and enjoyed the party life before his diagnosis last winter, but his doctors have convinced him that he has to leave that life behind.

Now Kenny is planning on earning a certification to work with mentally and behaviorally challenged children as an aide or care provider. To accomplish that he has been our most faithful student in our GED and educational program which operates through the volunteers efforts of Peggy Still, a member of the FMC Board and Anna deSouza.

“I am very grateful to the Father McKenna Center for helping me in many ways, but especially the education and the support I get from everyone to continue my recovery from addiction. I am pleased that I have found a way to give back by helping the food pantry patrons,” Kenny reflected.

Celebrating Birthdays for the Homeless

“I felt really sad that I had no one to share my birthday with,” commented one of our guests last spring.

Indeed, for single homeless men there is a support group for many aspects of their lives, but their personal life is often shared with no one. And families are often not in the picture; some by choice, some because of the circumstances that led to homelessness.

So, at the suggestion of one of our great volunteers the Father McKenna Center has initiated a program of celebrating all the men we serve who birthday falls in a given month on the last Wednesday of the month.

During the last week of the month we collect the names of all whose birthday is in that

month. Through the generous support of Safeway Stores we have a sheet cake to mark the occasion.

We also hold a raffle for a gift card. Currently we have one gift card for \$25 for the winner.

We would like to expand the program, but need an *angel* to help us make that a reality.

If you are willing to help us celebrate the birthdays of the men we serve, we need \$1,250 to underwrite the birthday program for 2015.

Can we count on your help?

“It made me feel appreciated and cared for as a person, reflected that same guest when we celebrated his birthday!



A reflection from

Ned Hogan, Director of Development

The past four months have been an interesting time for the Father McKenna Center. We've had some changes, especially the transition from Tom Howarth's leadership. Yet, at its core the mission and the work of the Father McKenna Center has continued without missing a beat, due to the hard work of the staff and our great volunteers.



During the summer we continued to see moments of great success, like Norman who was able to secure a place for himself and now has a job. He is just one of many men who sought our help, got what he needed, and have made a transition to a new life after homelessness.

We've also experienced the patience that it takes to help many of our guests to move forward. For some the next right step seems so elusive. Like for Peter, the man Tom Howarth wrote about in April. Peter is 70 years old and has been on the streets for many years. Sometimes we realized that the best we could do for Peter was to provide a good meal and a safe place to "hang out." At other times we are all convinced that we need to get Peter into a stable situation that will provide him security in his elder years.

I have been on the staff at the McKenna Center since January, and in that time I have learned many lessons about trying to help these men and women we serve. The most important thing we do is welcome them, and treat them like special, unique people. I don't know every man's name, but I know many of them - and they are becoming an important part of my life and who I am. I have also learned that this work can be frustrating because you see so clearly that there are ways to help. At the same time circumstances make it challenging for them to take what I consider the next right steps. The men come only some of the time; the Center has limited resources and must make hard choices; and the realities of our world sometimes make it seem overwhelming to our guests, so they make less than healthy choices.

Each day as I drive to the Center I say a prayer for the men we serve, and for the many people who make our work possible - the volunteers, the donors, the Foundations and corporate partners we have. I pray that God will bless each of us with the grace to follow Fr. Horace McKenna's example of selfless service of others, because they are our brothers and sisters.

And each day, as I greet Dana or Kenny or any of the hundreds of men we serve, I have come to realize that I receive those graces I pray for through them. Their smiles, their struggles, their small successes are the answer to my prayer each day.

Now we welcome Kimberly Cox as the new President of the Father McKenna Center. She joins a dedicated team of men willing to serve those in need of assistance. She will lead us to develop new patterns of service and care for the men and women we assist, but most importantly she will continue the legacy of service and genuine care that began with Horace McKenna, SJ, and continues through each of us.

As we prepare to welcome Kim to the Father McKenna Center I would be remiss if I did not say a special word of thanks to Ed Orzechowski, who has been the interim President. He has done a superb job of supporting the team and making this transition possible. Ed has learned how this place is a blessing to the many who come for our help and can be a grace and a challenge all at once. Ed has been a great mentor to each of us on the team and we are very grateful for his care and service to FMC this year.

You have supported the Father McKenna Center, some for many years, some for a few months. I ask you to help us continue to welcome the stranger and bring them into the fold of Father McKenna's care. You make possible all that we do, and we are very grateful for your support. Together we make the spirit of Father McKenna live in our midst by our loving service of others.