



From the Director

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



Fr. Bill Wack, C.S.C.

Once again, the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas was our busiest of the year. There was plenty of need around us – and plenty of generous folks to assist as well. It is a blessing simply to be a part of it all, especially during that holy time of the year.

The season was not without its difficulties, however, as our building was broken into four times, we had a fire in our commercial dryer that could have gotten out of hand, and we experienced some car troubles on top of all of that. Fortunately there were no injuries or lasting damage done. Indeed, these troubles are small compared to those that our guests endure daily.

With your help André House has served the homeless and poor of the Valley quite well for the past 22 years, and we will continue to do so as long as there is need. We have provided clothing, food, shelters, blankets, etc., to tens of thousand of people in that time. It remains our focus to assist people with the things they need to survive and escape life on the streets, if possible.

Recently, however, I have been asking: what more can we do? After seeing the numbers of our guests grow during my 5 years here I am wondering if we cannot find a way to bring down the number of people living on the streets or in our shelters. If the answer is housing (and I think that is exactly what is needed), what role can we play in finding this for so many?

One thing we can do is work with agencies that are already providing permanent, supportive housing. We are currently looking at joining “**Helping Hands Housing Services**” in providing housing for many (homeless) families in our area. More will be needed, however, if we are to see an end to homelessness in our area.

It’s a lofty goal, to be sure. But it’s one that CAN be achieved – sooner than most people think. (For more information please read my article, “Ending Homelessness,” (page 5 inside.) The issues and problems we face are tremendous, but they are not insurmountable. Let’s dream big this year so that we can lay the foundations of a better life for thousands.

May God bless you always!
Fr. Bill

Thank You to Wed Volunteers - by H. Nguyen	2
A Call To Action - by K. Masloski	3
What Do We Really Need? - J Parreira	4
An Erie Update - M. Candelaria	
Ending Homelessness? -Fr Bill Wack, CSC	5
Reflection - RJ Sak	6
Universal - M Lashlee	7

Peace! Peace!



Thank You to My Wednesday Volunteers!

-by Hoa Nguyen



Frank Madura preps the eggs.

with Maria Candelaria. I saw her running around the kitchen and doing many tasks like straining the spaghetti and chopping onions. I thought, "WOW! Will that be me next year?" I was so scared that I would mess up or get behind the soupline schedule. I noticed that Maria had to finish a task by a certain time in order to move on to the next one. I could tell that Maria had a lot of pressure on her to complete everything by 5:15pm in order to serve dinner to the guests on time. I was impressed to see how she ran a soupline and still had a smile on her face at the end of the day. If Maria could handle all of that work AND still have a smile on her face, I could handle it too. It could not be as stressful as it seems.

Before going to Rocky Point, Mexico, in August, I remember Chela Sullivan, a former staff member, told me that I should sign up for the Wednesday soupline — hot dogs and beans. She said, "there are a lot of people who volunteer regularly who are very nice, and you will love Frank. He is awesome, and he knows how to run the soupline with a blindfold on." So I did sign up for the Wednesday soupline. The night before my first soupline, Joe Parreira, last year's Wednesday night coordinator, gave me detailed instructions on preparing the meal and told me what items I needed to get at the St. Mary's Food Bank. I was so nervous; I was sure I would mess up and not do a good job. But all that changed when Frank Madura came through the double doors. I introduced myself and told him that I would be in

The moment that the former Core Staff ('05-'06) said "Hoa, we would like you to join the Core Staff for next year," I was happy and excited, but also nervous. I knew I would have a lot of responsibilities working at Andre House, but my biggest fear was coordinating a soupline. When I was here for my interview, I observed a Tuesday soupline

charge of the Wednesday soupline this year. He gave me a hug and said, "Welcome!"

From that day forth, Frank made everything easy for me. He taught me how to make the "special" bean sauce and told me what needed to be done to prepare the soupline. I thought to myself, "How can I do all of this on my own?" But, Frank told me some of the regular volunteers have "special jobs" they like to do. As the soupline went on, one of my volunteers came in and asked, "Where is Joe?" and I told him "I am the new Joe for this year." When I saw the upset look on his face at my reply, I felt a little disappointed and thought maybe some volunteers might not like me since I was not Joe. I might do things differently than he did, and they might not like me because of that, but was I wrong. I got to know so many regular volunteers that I call them my "Wednesday soupline family." I got to meet Ron Meyers, Marie Evans and Nancy Concholar who sort hotdog buns; Donald Sklodowski who cuts up meats and cooks the eggs; Jan Hoeschler, Sandy Meyers, Peggy Bell and Gloria Brown who make salad; Janice Mannke, Flynnie and Tom Meyer who set up the condiments, coffee and water; Tony Yozzo who runs the dishwasher machine (he will be missed on Wednesday night when he leaves for his new job in FL); Fred Mannke who works the pit; Frank Bell who makes fruit salad. I have few new Wednesday regulars, Frank Ruff, Mary

— *cont'd on page 6*



Wednesday Night Volunteer Crew

A Call to Action

- by Kristen Masloski



When I came to Phoenix for the first time with a service group from King's College, Pennsylvania, I had many misconceptions about the homeless. I thought that nearly everyone who was homeless was in that situation because of drugs or alcohol; I felt that I would just be giving handouts to people who were too lazy, high, or drunk to get a job and take care of his or herself. I remember journaling about these same topics my first two days here, but then something changed.

I had never done much *direct* service with the homeless and working poor before coming to Phoenix. Most of my service experience prior was behind-the-scenes work or Habitat for Humanity. My lack of experience and my own stereotypes of the homeless developed, as most people's stereotypes do: out of ignorance.

Once I submerged myself in the André House work, I found that most of the guests that I worked with on a daily basis were friendly, honest people who posed no threat to me whatsoever. In addition, after talking with several of the transitional house guests, I came to understand just how easy it is for someone to become homeless, and how homelessness can happen to people in all walks of life. Eventually, I came to realize that people are people. Just like anyone else that I meet, homeless people should be treated with dignity and respect and not just stereotyped into a "those people" category.



Now, I realize that homelessness is caused by many different situations, not only drugs and alcohol (although they are still prominent causes). Sometimes people get sick, lose their jobs, blow through their savings, and end up on the street. It can be that easy, and it can happen to just about any middle-class working person.

Because of the lack of empathy many people have towards the homeless, it bothers me greatly to hear someone make a general comment about "those people" being all drunks or druggies, because, although it may be true that some people do have problems with drugs or alcohol, not everyone on the street does. All people, regardless of economic status or condition, should be treated with respect and treated justly by their society.

I am going on a social justice trip to El Salvador in March. At my group meetings we discuss what we will be encountering there and what the Salvadorans deserve as people. The more I think about these issues, the more I realize when I think of social justice, I only tend to think of developing countries and not of America. Yet in my work everyday I see a need for social justice right here at André House, and the best way to begin the work of social justice is to start by ending the stereotypes. Moreover, I believe that it is our duty not only as citizens of a free and rich country, but also as fellow humans, to help those in need. People helping other people is the essence of community, the essence of a support system built on people that trust one another and view each other as equals. Here at André House, we strive to build a community, not just among ourselves as staff, but also among our guests, both at the transitional houses and at the Hospitality Center. Without this sense of community, we would not be the André House that we are today: a welcoming safe haven, striving to make social justice a reality.

- KM

What Do We *Really* Need?

by Joe Parreira

+ Throughout the course of life, how many times do we either repeat to ourselves or hear the words, "I need"? I need a car; I need watch; I need an XBOX; or, I need food or something to drink. With all the many things that we pass our time and days needing, the questions that separate those needs are decided by what is needed and what is wanted.

+ What would be considered something that we need? As far as what we need to live (in this world), things needed would be the obvious: air, water, food. We need air for breathing and oxygenating the blood to keep the heart pumping. We need water to fluid our bodies keep them hydrated. Then of course there is food, which the body needs for various nutrition and energies to make all other things function. But still the question remains...what do we need?

+ Working here at Andre House, we see many needs and hear of many needs, but how do we help to answer the question, what is needed? Day by day, we will hear from our guests or volunteers: I need clothes. I need a locker. I need a shower. I need a bus ticket. I need an easier version of the 1040EZ tax form. I need shoes. I need money. I need a place to stay. I need a vacation. I need, I need, I need... How again do we truly answer the question of what is really needed, even in this place where we live and work?

+ In a Gospel reading from Luke, Jesus speaks to someone in a crowd who says to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to give me my share of our inheritance." He replies saying, "Friend who has set me up as your judge or arbiter?" Then He says to the whole crowd, "Avoid greed in all its forms. A man may be wealthy, but his possessions do not guarantee him life." He then conti-nues with a parable of a man who had a harvest in great abundance but had no more room to store it, so he decided to take down his small barns and build bigger ones to store up more and more of his abundant harvest for years to come with no worries. Then God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life shall be required of you, to whom will all this piled-up wealth of yours go?"

Where does one's piled up wealth and possessions go?

+ What do we really need? We need to love others (as God loves us); we need to do God's will; we need to obey God's commandments; we need Jesus in our lives; and, we need to be Jesus to others in our world, especially when the time of need comes about, and we ask ourselves, "What do we really need?" - JP

An Erie Update

by Maria Candelaria, 2005 -06
Core Staff

Hello from Erie Pennsylvania! I hope all my fine Andre House friends are enjoying that warm weather out there. We are currently in the midst of one of the worst winters Erie has seen in 20 years! And I'm lucky enough to be a part of it. Sufficed to say, getting used to this snow (especially driving in it) has been quite challenging. I miss the sunshine of Arizona.

I am currently working at Gannon University as a Campus Minister. Gannon is a small diocesan college, five blocks from Lake Erie on the Pennsylvania, Ohio border. I live in a Freshmen Residence Hall, and tend to the emotional and spiritual needs of the dorm. So basically, when people are having family problems, struggles with eating disorders, depression, friends, adjusting to college life etc., they come and talk to me! It's quite rewarding, but can be difficult when I'm dealing with suicide attempts and going to the hospital with sick students night after night. But one of the first things I did was have spaghetti dinners for the dorm! I put my Andre House cooking skills to work, and I cannot tell you how many people complimented the fabulous secret sauce! The other part of my job involves working within the Chaplain's Office planning retreats, organizing Liturgy, and advising faith-sharing groups. It's a great time! I am blessed to have met so many wonderful people and have made such fantastic friends. But I think about Andre House and miss the wonderful community there. I was so excited to spend the day there when my plane was diverted after a huge snow storm in Albuquerque over Christmas break! It was so nice to see some of you...I hope to visit again soon.

I do miss you all, and pray for you daily. I feel so blessed to have spent the year among such wonderful people. All the experiences and relationships from last year are an integral part of me, and I hope you know how much I love you! If you're ever in Pennsylvania, give me a call! And please keep in touch. My e-mail address is candelar002@gannon.edu. May God bless you always and forever! - MC



Ending Homelessness?

- by Fr Bill Wack, CSC

We want to help bring and end to homelessness. We want to work ourselves out of a job. When people hear these statements they are naturally skeptical. Didn't Jesus say that the poor would always be with us? While he did utter this curious statement (more as a way to get the religious leaders of his day to focus on his message), I don't think he was absolving us of our efforts to alleviate the scourge of homelessness.

We tend to think of this as being an age-old problem. Haven't there always been people who are homeless? Yes and no. There have been people throughout history who have been wanderers, nomads, drifters, hobos, or just people who need to be off by themselves. But homelessness – describing a class of people who go from place to place and shelter to shelter for years on end – is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Many date the beginning of chronic homelessness to the 1980s, when many of our mental institutions were closed and a lot of social services to the needy were cut off. When they converted an old morgue into a shelter here in Phoenix in 1984, city officials and activists truly thought that this was a temporary measure; something to tide us over for a few months while we go through this. 23 years later, however, we still have homelessness, and we have since built larger and more extensive shelters and soup kitchens.

Can we imagine homelessness coming to an end? I don't think that the solution is all that difficult. While shelters and soup kitchens keep people going they are not the solution to homelessness in the long run. The answer to this blight is HOUSING: permanent, affordable, supportive housing. For decades we have been treating the symptoms of homelessness and relegating care for them to "professional" caregivers.

We can do this. How? By coming together as a community to provide housing – in renovated apartment buildings, run-down motels, and other properties, both privately and publicly owned. If a person has the opportunity to own their own place, it is a good bet that most will work to keep it. But we need to do more than simply give a homeless person a place in which to live; we need to support them in the long haul, helping them to be clean and sober, find a job, get the medical and psychological help they need.

Other communities are starting to do this with great success. Philadelphia, San Diego, New York, San Francisco, and Chicago are pioneers in this area, and their efforts have reduced the "street count" of homeless persons by as much as 75% in a couple of years. We can do this here in Phoenix. It's cheaper than what we are doing now, it gets to the heart of the problem, and it's the right thing to do. We just need some people to step up and do it.

For the remainder of my time here I feel called to dream big and to help to motivate others to address this. Will you assist me? After consulting with many people – service providers, city, county, and state officials, locals and others in Washington – I hope to call a gathering of interested folks together to address this and get going on the solution.

Until we can put an end to chronic homelessness people need a place like André House. With your help we will continue to offer emergency services to the most needy among us. But while we're helping others with their immediate needs, I believe we can start to look at their long-term needs as well.

I'll let you know how it's going in the next newsletter. In the meantime, please pray for us and for our efforts. It's a big task, but it's something we all can do, for Jesus has said, "With human beings it is impossible, but not with God. With God all things are possible."
- Fr Bill Wack, CSC

Reflection

- by RJ Sak, 2005-06 Core Staff

The St. Louis marathon is April 15. I decided to train for this "fun run" several months ago. Each morning I wake up before sunrise to run my daily mileage. By the time I finish running, the sweat has frozen to my hat and, despite wearing gloves, my cold hands have trouble unlocking the front door. It is winter in the Midwest. And this is my idea of "fun". What a far cry from the Arizona desert! How in the world did I end up in St. Louis? And how come when all I want is a steaming hot shower, the water is only lukewarm? I want answers. I want them now!

Upon leaving Andre House, I moved in with my parents in Omaha, NE. Oh how the tables turn. Now I was the one receiving hospitality. It was also my turn to find a job. I found temporary work as a "barista" at a local coffee house. In my free time I attended job fairs, sent out resumes, and pursued job interviews in hopes of securing a job offer. Andre House guests are given 12 weeks to find a fulltime job. Several months passed before I found mine. This was humbling.

Today I work for The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. I work within the Federal Reserve Law Enforcement Unit as a Business Support Analyst. My days are filled doing expense accounting reports and various administrative work projects. I even have my own cubicle and nameplate! Having this reliable job enables me the liberty of self-reliance. I value this responsibility immensely.

- cont'd on page 7



Volunteer Appreciation Day!

Sunday, March 18th

Mass @ 10:00am at the

Hospitality Center

213 S 11th Av, Phoenix 85007

Potluck Brunch immediately

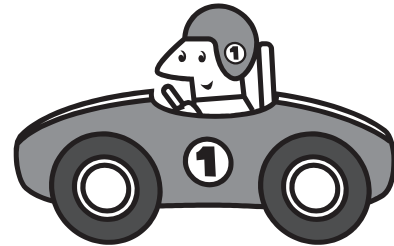
following Mass.



Andre House Needs A Car!

If you have a car in good working condition that you would be interested in donating to Andre House, please contact:

Brother Richard at
602-255-0580.



Wed Volunteers, cont'd

- from page 2

Bishop, Jim Ontko, Merge Connel and Lupe Marid that are always willing to do anything that I ask, whatever it may be.

As days and months passed by, I got to learn all of the regular volunteers' names which took me a long time, but I finally got to know each person individually. Now I always look forward to my soupline and greet my family with open arms. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of my volunteers who are helping to make my year of service one of the greatest experiences of my life. I couldn't run the soupline without their help. My volunteers make my Wednesday soupline not only a gathering of people to server dinner, but family reunion. THANK YOU EVERYONE!!

- HN

Universal

by Matt Lashlee, 2005–06 Core Staff

Every Thursday it hits. At about 5:30p.m. I'm usually stuck in traffic, leaving the city, heading home to relax. At almost every red light or highway intersection I see someone standing with a cardboard sign, needing or asking for something. Money, food, and more often than not "anything you can spare." Poverty is universal.

Immediately, I remember the scene at the corner of Jackson St and 11th Av when "Gate" and "Soupline" are in full swing. Starting the line for dinner, cleaning bathrooms, greeting volunteers, finishing the "Mighty Bean Burritos," and sharing jokes with Thursday volunteers are all customary of the 5:30p.m. activities at the Hospitality Center. It became fun, routine, and sometimes draining, and I miss it.

More than ever, as I sit behind a computer, caffeinated and pouring through emails and various work projects, I miss the feel of "real service." Some days, it seems like the work at Andre House is the most important and rewarding I will ever find. It's a place that never leaves those who live and work there. Andre House is universal. It reminds me of the experience I had when I first walked into St. Ignatius the Martyr Faith Community in Austin, Texas, where I now live and work. I have been a part of several parishes and communities, but the feeling I get and the faith and good works of the people in each community are universal. I feel at home.

All that has made Andre House over the years, the guests and Core, the volunteers and awesome goodwill of those who donate, and the deeply faithful community are all parts of our universal response to God's love for us. The challenge when we are not physically at Andre House, I think, is to live a life guided by what we learn and what we experience at Andre House. At the conclusion of Catholic Mass, we are called to go in peace to love and serve the Lord and one another. When we leave Andre House at the end of the day, week, or a year of service, our call remains the same.

On those Thursdays in traffic, while picturing the many faces at the Hospitality Center around dinner time, I am reminded that wherever we are, we are called to respond to God's love in what we do for others. Our call is universal. No gifts we receive are for keeping; they are to be shared through prayer and action. The community and support provided at Andre House are the same. Andre House is made universal when we take our experiences from the Hospitality Center or the Polk House and use them to renew the face of the earth.

- ML



Reflection, cont'd

- from page 6

A couple days ago I was eating lunch in our staff lounge and I overheard two co-workers converse:

"Whole carrots and apple cores...?"

"Oh yeah, that's RJ's lunch each and every day".

Rest assured that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

I am happy with my decision to return to the Midwest. Yet I regularly daydream about Andre House. I miss all the familiar people: our community, guests, and volunteers. And the memories; I cherish them. Good or bad, it's no matter. Memories keep Andre House alive in me. I can't tell you how much this means to me.

I don't have plans to volunteer at a local soup kitchen anytime soon. Life is just so busy. I intend to enroll in an MBA program this fall. I suppose work will only make me busier. I'll be lucky if I can continue to eek out time to run in the morning. And so it goes. I do plan to keep moving on and doing my thing in this world. What a difference the "open door" makes. I'm sure you know just what I mean. - RS

Non-Profit Org
Us Postage
Paid
Phoenix, AZ
Permit No. 2751



PO Box 2014
Phoenix, AZ 85001
Phone: 602-252-9023 or 602-255-0580
www.andrehouse.org

The Open Door

INSIDE:

- 2005-06 Core Staff
- Updates. A special
- thank you to them for
- their contributions to
- this issue of The
- Open Door.



**Join us every First
Friday for Mass and
a Potluck Supper at**



André House Needs:

Spring Focus Items!

Sunscreen (especially travel sizes)

Phone cards (for long distance phone calls)

Men's Jeans (especially sizes 30-38)

Men's & Women's Underwear (esp. larger sizes)

Deodorant

Cough drops, ibuprofen, vitamins, etc.

