

The Open Door

From the Director

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Fr. Bill Wack, C.S.C.



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Hello from André House. During this holy season of Easter let us give thanks to God for the gift of reconciliation and new life through the Resurrection of Jesus. Even in the midst of an environment filled with poverty, homelessness and despair, we can see glimpses of hope and new life. A few of our guests are able to overcome their trials and seek a better life away from our neighborhood. Others band together to help to protect and support one another in their efforts to survive and cope. More and more people join us from parishes, families, and businesses to help to alleviate some of the hunger and need that afflicts so many here.

The Resurrection of Jesus proves once and for all that things like sin, trials, tragedies and even death itself do not have the last word. All has been swallowed up in victory. It remains for us to live and preach the Gospel so that more and more people can become aware of this Good News.

This is what we attempt to do every day at André House. And thanks to good people like you we are able to do great things for many people. In the process we find that we, too, are helped as we grow in our knowledge of and love for God.

As this is the end of my sixth year here I may be changing assignments in July. If I do move to another apostolate (for example, a parish?) I want to express my profound gratitude to you for your prayers, your example and your contribution to this ministry. I have learned more here than I can possibly express. And I can honestly say that it has been the best six years (to date) of my life! (If I do stay for another year I ask for your continued assistance and prayers, of course.)

May God bless the people we serve. May God bless you as well!

Peace,
Fr. Bill





Grooming Guillermo

-by Margaret Bouffard

If we were seniors in high school voting for our yearbook superlatives, Guillermo would get voted "Most Popular." Everybody knows him and loves him. His fellow guests affectionately call him Speedy, although he moves at quite a slow pace due to a stroke. Guillermo joins us for daily mass in our parking lot, always greeting us with a smile as he says "Buenos dias". Occasionally he accompanies Kelly to a local tortillaria to pick up our weekly tortilla donation and then treats Kelly to a chimichanga afterwards. He easily won the hearts of all the Core Community members as someone who is always smiling and laughing. Although there is limited verbal communication due to the language barrier, much gets said and laughs are shared through few words and many gestures.

For the first six months of my commitment here at André House, I worked afternoon showers on Tuesdays. Guillermo would sit with me while I handed people towels, soap and other toiletries. We took turns teaching each other English and Spanish words for simple items such as soap and comb. Soon, Guillermo grew comfortable enough to ask me to

clip his fingernails. I never groomed anyone before and wasn't exactly comfortable trimming someone else's fingernails. But Guillermo has limited use of his left arm so it was something he truly needed. And that's how it began - my grooming Guillermo. Since then, I

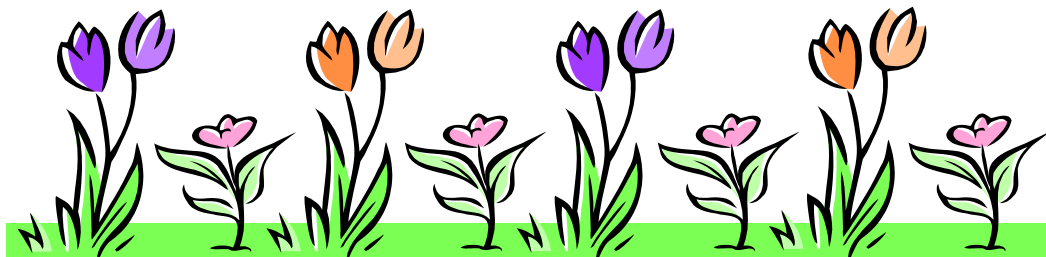
have routinely clipped his fingernails, cut his hair a few times, and trimmed his mustache. It has certainly been a growing experience for me. I never imagined myself cutting anyone's fingernails other than my own.

I mentioned earlier that Guillermo won the hearts of the staff here. It's clear to see the love that the staff extends to those we serve, especially Guillermo. There have been many after-work conversations during which

the staff shares stories of Guillermo. We speak about how fun he is to have in the shower office when all we do is smile and giggle. We laugh about the fact that there are only two topics Guillermo likes to discuss - who is cooking today and who will be in the afternoon showers. Occasionally, there are tough days here at André House, but seeing Guillermo first thing at mass allows our days to begin with a smile. ☩



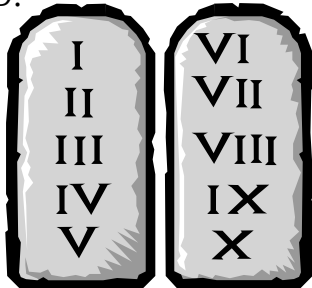
**Guillermo & Margaret
working the showers.**



The André House Ten Commandments

- by Kelly Kennedy

- I. NO SHIRT, NO SHOES — WE'LL FIND SOME FOR YOU.
- II. NO (SUCH THING AS) TRESPASSING.
- III. THE GROUNDS ARE TO BE A PEACEFUL PLACE AT ALL TIMES.
- IV. LOVE THY NEIGHBORS IN LINE.
- V. RESPECT WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU, TEN-FOLD.



- VI. MASS WILL BE HELD DAILY. ALL ARE WELCOME.
- VII. EVEN HEAVEN HAS LINES.
- VIII. THE SOUP-LINE MUST GO ON!
- IX. OUR VOLUNTEERS, BENEFACTORS AND FRIENDS MAKE IT ALL POSSIBLE.
- X. ANY: LAUNDRY, SHOWERS, CLOTHING, PHONE-CALLS, BOOT VOUCHERS, BLANKETS, TOILETRIES, ICE, SEATS IN THE SHADE, BATHROOM USE AND/OR FOOD WILL BE GIVEN ON A FIRST-COME/FIRST-SERVED BASIS.

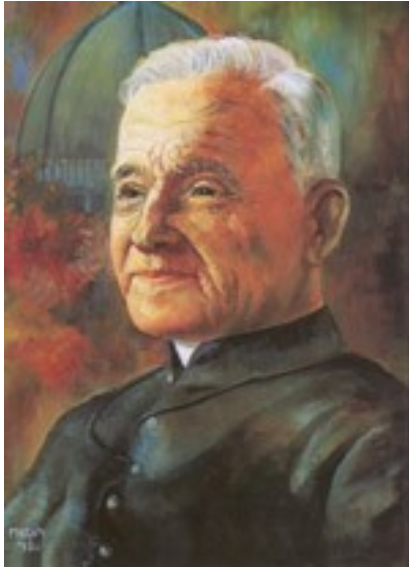
In Loving Memory of Tom Meyer



The André House Community recently lost a loyal volunteer and dear friend, Tom Meyer. He passed from this life on October 27, 2007, doing his favorite thing - riding his bike in the morning before beginning his day. Tom and his wife, Flynnie, have come to André House every Wednesday for many, many years. I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words in Tom's memory.

Tom always gave with no thought of return. I remember meeting Tom and Flynnie for the first time when I came to André House, in August 2006. Tom was the first one to come through the door, and as I introduced myself to him, I instantly knew he was someone who was dear to many people. We shook hands the first time we met. These handshakes quickly turned into hugs that I enjoyed getting from Tom, Flynnie and all my volunteers. Tom was as selfless a person as I have ever known. He always went above and beyond and filled in anywhere and everywhere when things needed to be done...such as counting hot dog buns when Ron or Marie were not here or filling up water for the guests. What I will miss most about Tom is his warmth and generosity toward the volunteers and the guests. The soupline goes on, but it is just not the same without Tom. He is missed by us all each and every day.

- Hoa Nguyen



Br André Bessette

Brother André Bessette

1845–1937

André House is inspired by and named after a Holy Cross Brother, André Bessette who was known for offering a welcoming presence to the afflicted, hope for the discouraged and healing for the sick. He is beatified by the Roman Catholic Church and soon will likely be canonized a saint. André was born in 1845 to a family of 12 and was orphaned at an early age. Plagued by bad health and poverty, he spent his first twenty five years wandering as a laborer on farms and in factories in both Canada and the United States. At one point, he even worked as a manual laborer in a young, western city named Phoenix.

In 1870 back in Canada, he joined the Holy Cross Community in Montreal. He was given simple work as a janitor and door-keeper at a Holy Cross school. Soon he became known as a kind person with great faith who was willing to listen. Those who visited him found a hospitable presence, comfort and healing. Very often, they also found relief of mind and body. Brother André's reputation as a healer spread to the point that thousands flocked to him daily.

On January 6, 1937, over a million people gathered for the funeral services of Brother André Bessette, then known as the "Miracle Man of Montreal". The epitaph on his gravestone sums up his life:

Pauper. servus et humilis.
A poor and humble servant.

Prayer for the Canonization of Brother André

Lord, you have chosen Blessed Brother André
to spread devotion to Saint Joseph
and to dedicated himself to all those who are
afflicted.

Grant through his intercession the favour that
we now request...

We also pray that the Church may canonize
him as soon as possible. Grant us the
grace to imitate his piety and charity so that,
with him, we may share the reward
promised to all who care for their
neighbours out of love for You.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord

Amen.

In a homily honoring Brother André,
Pope John Paul II said:

"A daily crowd-of the sick, the afflicted, the poor of all kinds--those who were handicapped or wounded by life--came to him. They found in his presence a welcome ear, comfort and faith in God. Do not the poor of today have as much need of such love, of such hope, of such education in prayer?" May 23, 1982

André House staff and volunteers see this need today and respond through hospitality and service to the poor.

André House Trip 2008

-by Abe Clabby, '08 Spring Break Volunteer



[Abe Clabby is from St Edward's University in Austin, TX. The school sends a group of students & leaders to André House over their Spring Break every year to perform service work and submerge themselves in the "André House experience." Following are some of his thoughts on his encounters during his Alternative Spring Break spent with the guests of André House.]

I remember hearing once that trips like these are hard to describe to anyone who did not go. People ask, "How was it?" What do you tell them, "I had fun?" This Spring Break did not fit into a category: fun, educational, spiritual...none of these. It was just an experience; one that will linger with me for years.

I did things for homeless people. I talked with them. I made them dinner. I gave them clothes. I gave them the chance to shower (didn't shower them myself!) I even cleaned their bathrooms. All in a day's work at André House; or, that is, in five days' work.

By the end of my time there, I felt like I would forever have some connection with the people on the side of the road, the unshaven men slumping over shopping carts, and all the other forms that homelessness shows its face. You cannot always tell at a glance who is living on the streets and in shelters. I think a lot more about homelessness now...though I still do not know what to make of it. Now that I know them, I wonder more than ever—how many of them have no other choice and cannot make a living? How many of them cannot work for the simple reason that they are so depressed? I think of all of them: the swaying sore-voiced singing lady, the two transvestites, the Polio victim with an electric wheelchair his brother dropped off for him, the "not-all-there" guy who sips every water on the table except his, the staggering drunkard who shouted things at us that are not fit to print, and the three guys who proposed to three of the female volunteers.

For me it was separate world. I brought nothing but a notebook, some clothes, and a few toiletries. I had no remnants of the universe of things to do: no fun or work or friends I know...just the five other volunteers and three group leaders. I really got to know them well. We also worked with a group from Emmanuel College in Boston.

During orientation for the trip, they kept talking about "simplicity." I think this was what they meant: I could do a hundred odd jobs for ten hours a day not feel overwhelmed. It wasn't "work." And I did not have to try hard to have fun. I could just talk and listen to people. Like the Seven Dwarves, but chatting while we worked instead of whistling.

And then we went home. That whole world dissolved instantly. I was back in my Austin world...friends, work, fun and all. I already miss having things simple. And I hear rumors that there's a homeless shelter in Downtown Austin somewhere...



St Edward's University
(Austin, Texas)

André House: Shattering Your Expectations for 20-some Years

by Gilbert Coyle

I am not sure how many of our readers and supporters are aware of this fact, but the Core Community participates in what is titled a “monthly facilitated group meeting.” I did not think to ask what this was when I first applied to be on staff, but I now know this meeting as our group psychologist session. Our facilitator and loyal André House supporter, Doctor George Joumas, meets with us and helps us flesh out our thoughts and feelings about working in community at André House. Community living can be exciting and rewarding but also very stressful and challenging, so George helps clear the air surrounding any rising problems or issues. There is often a lot of hesitation to talk about our innermost feelings, such is only human nature, so there are many “pregnant pauses.” George tries to help us fill those pregnant pauses by posing questions to us about our work. In January, George asked us about our expectations coming into this year of service and whether or not they have been met, exceeded, or dropped.

I remember that I came to André House without many expectations. This was just going to be a year away from college in which I worked a lot, grew up a little spiritually, and left at the end the year with a sense of having done some good in the world. I have no problem admitting that these were low and base expectations for me to have for myself and for André House, but I really was not looking for much in my service year. If those were truly my goals, then I came to the wrong place because André House has done so much more for me than provide work and a little “growing up.” Brother Richard has said that so many people may have a college degree but they also have a spiritual life on the level of a first grader. That is how I felt coming into this year, but now I think I might have graduated to at least second grade, perhaps even third because of the spiritual immersion we experience. I never expected to make such close friends. They say that the best friendships are forged in adversity and I think that if the level of adversity is proportional to the level of friendship, then we (the staff) and our regular volunteers will be friends for life. And, I never thought that I would be able to say “I have *enjoyed* doing laundry for ten homeless people every Monday for the past seven months.” I fully expected to be sick of doing the same things week in and week out for a year, but I still find the work refreshing, rewarding, and exciting.

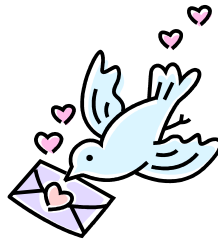
This is why I say “André House: Shattering Your Expectations for 20-some Years.” I have obviously not been around for twenty some years, but I know there are folks out there who have been. I hope that you have found that André House has shattered your own expectations. I see it every day in every volunteer that walks through our doors, whether it is their first time or their one thousandth time. There is no mistaking the fact that André House is a place where God’s work is done on Earth, where the neediest of his sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters, are provided with help. And so think about what you want to get out of your association with André House. Once you have those expectations made and in mind, come on down to 213 South 11th Avenue to have those expectations shattered and your mind blown away at the things we can accomplish as the André House community! ☩



Mailing List



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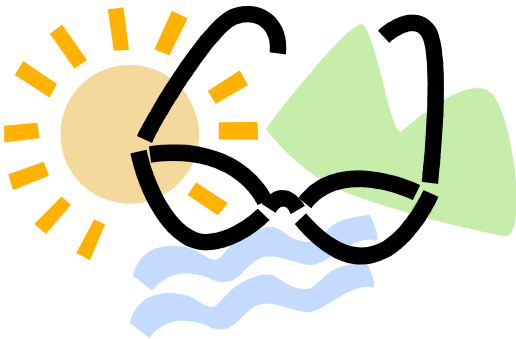
If any of these are true, please use the enclosed envelope and **send the mailing label on this newsletter** with either the changes that need to be made or the word, "Remove," on it. The list will be updated before our next mailing.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please call Teresa Hipp, Volunteer Coordinator, at 602-255-0580. If you leave the information on the voicemail, please leave a phone number incase there are questions. Thank you!

****André House's mailing list is not sold or given to any other organization****



Do you need Community Service Hours?



André House will be in great need of volunteers during June, July & August. As the snowbirds head home, the school groups break for the summer and people head off to vacation, we will have many service opportunities in the Soupline. Beat the rush to get your service hours in for next Fall by coming in and helping us this summer! Call to schedule your time or if you have questions...

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Teresa Hipp, Volunteer Coordinator
 Phone: 602-255-0580 ext 1
 Email: coordinator@andrehouse.org

(no drop-in's, please)



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The Open Door



**Join us every First
Friday for Mass and
a Potluck Supper at
Polk at 6:30 pm**



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.

