

The Open Door

From the Director

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



Fr. Eric Schimmel, C.S.C.

Greetings from André House.

By the time that you read this, I will have been here at André House for a full year. As I reach that marker in time, I start reflecting on how long André House has been living out the corporal works of mercy. This November marks 25 years. I feel humbled, honored, and blessed to be the Director this year as we plan a big celebration of our 25th

Anniversary that will take place the weekend of January 8-10, 2010.

As I was sitting in the Pascente Office the other day, I had a great conversation with David, one of our guests. He spoke of his gratitude for all that happens at André House. Many days I am privileged to hear such words of praise for André House. One thing that David said stayed with me. He said, "Isn't it amazing how many volunteers come each day to help out."

Yes, it is.

I truly am blessed and thankful to be in a position to see so many people come each and every day. I see grace present. It is amazing. But, like all things in life, when we are surrounded by anything for long enough, that which surrounds us can seemingly become normal.

André House is not a normal place; it is a specially blessed place.

Some people have asked me whether it is hard being at André House, especially with the downturn in the economy. Yes, it is hard to see the increase in demand for the services we provide. Yes, sometimes it is hard to think about where we will get everything we need to keep serving our brothers and sisters coming through our open door. But I do not want to be a person who focuses on the challenges. I believe that we are called to focus on our blessings.

We are blessed to have been around for nearly 25 years.

We are blessed by the many people who have spent a year, two years, or more as a member of our Core Community or on our staff.

We are blessed to have so many people who have helped us on a weekly basis, and those who have helped us for a season or so.

We are blessed by the numerous volunteers and benefactors who still love our guests and support our ministry.

To celebrate our blessings, we are having a Volunteer Appreciation celebration this July (see details on page 2.) As we say farewell to one great group of Core Staff members, they have asked to have an opportunity to say thanks.

Last, but certainly not least, I feel blessed by our guests. Guests like David constantly help to keep things real – to keep things in perspective. Without our guests, and without all of you, André House would not be the place it is today. I feel blessed to be here. And I thank God that I am here to be a part of this with you.

God bless,
Fr Eric

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Transitional Housing

- by *Steven Cottam*

There is no place like home; this movie truism makes me mindful of our Polk House guests—the individuals who live with us for a while in transitional housing. Many of them have found, due to unemployment or personal problems, themselves without a home. Very few of us will ever find ourselves in a situation in which we do not have shelter, yet I think we all have periods in our lives in which the concept of home becomes confusing or fluctuating.

I am at just such a moment, one in which my concept of home is in flux. I am moving to Chicago at the end of the year. For someone who has lived in Arizona his whole life, the proposition seems very disorienting. At the same time, my family and friends are scattering to grad schools and jobs across the country. And, of course, the André House family I know and love is coming to the end of its year together. Put all this together, and it looks like whether I define my home by people or places, either way it won't be there much longer.

All this has me thinking about home and what the good Lord might be trying to tell me through my own struggles, and the struggles of those I see before me. And I think it's a reminder that our homes, all our homes, are nothing more than transitional places of rest.

I think our general understandings of what makes a homes is too simplistic. If I have learned anything this year, it's that a home is so much more than four walls and an address. A home is security. A home is familiarity. A home is not only a place, but people. The show "Cheers" was right—sometimes you need to be someplace where everybody knows your name. It's why I am glad that we try to create a community at our Polk Street houses. We eat dinner

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VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION BRUNCH

Sunday, July 19, 2009
Mass at 10:00am / Brunch after

André House Hospitality Center
213 S 11th Av
Phoenix AZ 85007
(Northeast corner of 11th Av & Jackson)

If you have questions, contact Teresa at:
Phone: 602-255-0580 x302
E-mail: coordinator@andrehouse.org



André House



To honor the generosity of the many volunteers, benefactors & prayerful supporters of the André House ministry, we invite you to join us for Mass & potluck brunch on Sunday, July 19th. Please bring a dish to share. You will also have the opportunity to this past year's Core Community members "farewell."

We hope you will join us!



SAVE THE DATE!

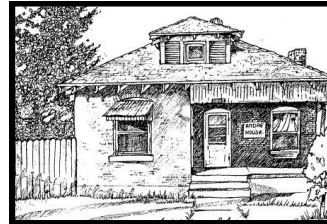
André House's

*Mark your calendars to celebrate with us:
Mass, meals, stories, service opportunities, and fun!*

More details coming soon!

Keep checking our website:
www.andrehouse.org

JANUARY 8-10, 2010



Transitional Housing - cont'd from pg 2



together, and we share holidays together. It's imperfect, sure, and you can never force someone to feel at home, but you can do a lot to make people feel not only sheltered, but also comfortable and welcomed.

And yet, I think our view of home is also entirely overrated. We put too much stock and too much time into maintaining and defending our versions of home. Home makes us feel safe, secure and comfortable when God is so often calling us to take risks in the service of the Kingdom. We end up being like the rich young man—Christ tells us to give up what we have and come follow him, but we cannot do so because we are too comfortable where we are.

The truth of the matter is all our homes in this world are transitional. They come and go. Don't get me wrong—the homes we create are important, even holy. However, they are temporary. They are, ultimately, not our real home. We are a pilgrim Church on Earth; we are sojourners in a foreign land. In this life we shall not set sight on our real homeland.

C.S Lewis once said, "If we discover a

desire within us that nothing in this world can satisfy, also we should begin to wonder if perhaps we were created for another world." I think this applies to the desire for a home; it can never be fully quenched on this earth. All our homes pass away. We move, and our homes change; we have kids, and our homes change; they move out, and our homes change. Or perhaps we live in community, where new members are always joining and old members are continually leaving.

However, being mindful of the transitory natures of our homes is useful. It reminds us that our homes are to be of service to the Kingdom. It reminds us to do all we can to make a home for all we meet and not to cling to our own temporary manifestation of home too tightly. It reminds us to open our homes to others or to leave our homes if we feel called. It reminds us that we are all strangers in a strange land, and so Christ's call to welcome the stranger applies to everyone, all the time.

There is no place like home, or so I have been told. Hopefully, I will get there someday, and see that to be true for myself.

Blessed: A Thank You Note to the André House Community

-by 2009-10 Core Community Members

Every day around 4:30pm a staff member heads out to the front gate to pass out meal tickets. It is common to find one of our favorite guests, Don, sitting near the gate. Always with a smile on his face, he offers his assistance in whatever we need, from helping to load coolers into the cargo van to scrubbing all the pans in the pit. Yet, what we really love about Don is that when we ask how his day is going he always responds in the most sincere manner by saying, "Blessed, just like every day is blessed."

Blessed is an interesting word choice for Don. He eats at a soup kitchen, lives in one of the roughest areas of Phoenix, and is constantly surrounded by drugs and violence. Yet, everyday he considers blessed. Don is one of the guests that constantly remind us that, even on our bad days, we are blessed to be here. André House is a place where the staff can easily become discouraged and bitter. Yet it is also a place of great hope. As we serve, we are given the unique opportunity to learn to love and forgive in the hardest of circumstances. This year at André House has been full of blessings for all of us, even if these blessings are hidden in stressors.

Through interactions with people like Don and the community of staff, volunteers, and guests, we have come to be truly thankful and consider ourselves abundantly blessed to have the privilege to serve at André House. Although we are here only one year, we will always hold this place and the people close to our hearts.

So here is an abbreviated list of the guests, volunteers and random occurrences in which we have found great blessing.

- *We are thankful for* regular volunteers, those who help us during soupline and those who take time during the day to cover shifts. We appreciate your time and talent, along with your hugs and encouraging words. We especially love the banana muffins and birthday cakes you bring for the staff.
- *We are thankful for* benefactors who donate goods that are of no lesser quality than those goods they use themselves. It can make a person feel very special to receive a handmade quilt.
- *We are thankful for* volunteers that come to André House for the first time and then fall in love with the place. We appreciate their enthusiasm, initiative, and willingness to do all that is necessary.
- *We are thankful for* the volunteers who invite staff members to their homes for brunch, dinner, ice cream, movie nights, long hikes, pool parties, Wii gaming, and just relaxing evenings with families. These activities provide a needed break.
- *We are thankful for* the guests we serve. They are patient when we are having difficult days and continually teach us humility and generosity. They step in and assist other guests when we cannot. We have seen guests give up meal tickets, shower spots, and even their own shoes when others were lacking.
- *We are thankful for* the guests at our transition houses. They open their lives to us in a unique way and teach us ways to make four walls into a community and a home.
- *We are thankful for* our parents. Each of our parents, in their own manner, has contributed to our community. Our parents have volunteered on our souplines, sent care packages and food boxes, have provided dinner for the staff, as well as supported us as we grew and developed as individuals throughout this year.
- *We are thankful for* the prayers from all over the country that individuals and communities offer.
- *We are thankful for* patrons who donate their time in unique ways, such as those who run donation drives, bring foods from bakeries and grocery stores, or organize the steam cleaning of the dining room.

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Blessed: A Thank You Note

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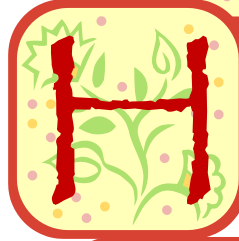
- *We are thankful for each other.* We have seen each other at our best, and we have seen each other at our worst. We are thankful for the honesty and forgiveness that we have each received and have given. Although incredibly different individuals when we entered, after a year at André House we genuinely have learned to love one another.
- *We are thankful for Fr. Bill.* He brought us all here to André House and led us through our first five months. His wisdom and humor echo in our hearts as we finish our time at André House.
- *We are thankful for Fr. Duane.* He continually supports us through saying Mass on Thursday and covering important shifts. We have always admired his ability to remember the name and story of every guest he talks with.
- *We are thankful for Fr. Eric,* for his concern and support of each of us. He has brought many new ideas to André House and always leads by example in passionately supporting the mission of André House.
- *We are thankful for Br. Richard;* he is truly André House's workhorse. He is our institutional memory. It is hard to be annoyed or anxious when Br. Richard is praying in thanksgiving for everything that goes right and reminding us that everything is "good good!"

All of these people and their acts make our lives easier and bring us great joy. This year has truly been a year of blessings. As a community we would like to extend our greatest thanks to all who have welcomed us into the larger André House community. We hope that next year's Core will end their year with as much love for this place and its people.

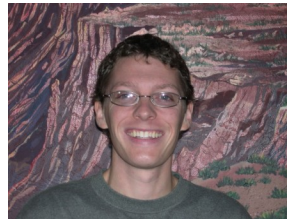
Peace and Blessings,
Lacy Liz Matt Michelle Steven



Lacy Gregor



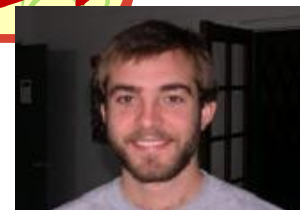
Elizabeth Diedrich



Matt Linderman



Michelle Carr



Steven Cottam

Keeping a Christ Room

by *Matthew Linderman*

Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the founders of Catholic Worker, had an interesting concept called a "Christ room." Many homes in our country have at least one unoccupied bedroom, while at the same time there are countless people who have found themselves for one reason or another to be homeless. Dorothy encouraged people to simply set aside a room in their house to offer to those who need a place to stay. In this way, we will be ministering to the needs of Christ, as he commanded us: "whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me." (Matt 25:40)

The beautiful thing about this approach is that it is both a big and a small act of love. Big, because it requires some sacrifice. It is not as easy as writing a check or volunteering for a few hours (as great and necessary as those things are.) Opening our home to someone is a more radical way of putting our faith into action and answering the Gospel call.

It is small because it does not require a big organization or campaign or fundraiser dinner to do it. It just takes one person or family that will make the choice. It is in these simple, yet radical acts of service and Christian hospitality that we can most effectively and authentically reveal God's love to the world.

Wishing to encourage such selfless acts of compassion, we at André House have decided to try and make it easier for those who would like to keep a "Christ room." Most who might find the courage and capacity to do such a thing

would probably not know very many people who don't have a place to stay and who they felt comfortable inviting into their home. At André House, however, we are often meeting these very people. The idea then is to match up those who have rooms with those who need a place.

So we are now looking for a few folks who would like to join us by offering to host someone in their home. We will try our best to accommodate your specific needs and requests. We will

only refer people who are sober and stable and who we know personally. To achieve this, we will limit our referrals to those who come through our transitional house. If we feel that our guest's needs would be better met elsewhere, and if we think they would do well in another's home, we may offer them the option. We will call a potential host and tell them a little about the guest, and they can then decide if they can take the person

in. Typically, hosts could expect not to have more than a couple of guests in a year.

If you live in the Phoenix area and this is something that you are interested in getting involved with, please contact me to talk about it more. I would be happy to answer any questions you have and explain it further. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

If you would like to help or have questions regarding what was outlined in this article, you can reach me (Matt) at 602-255-0580 x310 or linderman.matthew@gmail.com.



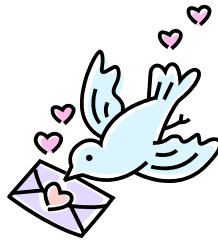
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Mailing List



Do you want to be removed from the mailing list? (STOP!)



Does your name or address need to be corrected?



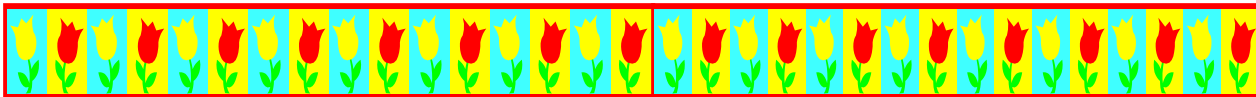
Are you reading a friend's copy of *The Open Door* & wanted to be added to our mailing list?



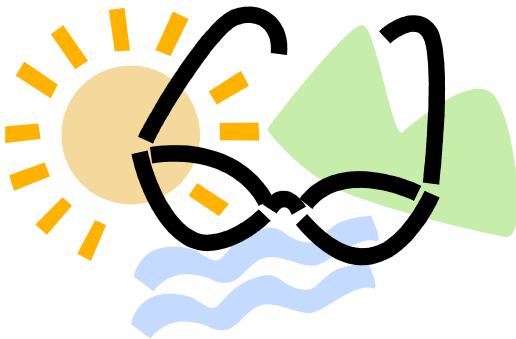
If any of these are true, please use the enclosed envelope and **send the mailing label on this newsletter** with either the changes that need to be made or the word, "Remove," on it. The list will be updated before our next mailing.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please call Teresa Hipp, Volunteer Coordinator, at 602-255-0580 x302. If you leave the information on the voicemail, please leave a phone number in case 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?

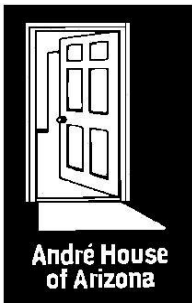


André House will be in great need of volunteers during July, August & September. As the snowbirds head home, the school groups break for the summer and people head off to vacation, we will have many service opportunities in the Soupline. Beat the rush to get your service hours in for next Fall by coming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

Teresa Hipp, Volunteer Coordinator
 Phone: 602-255-0580 ext 302
 Email: coordinator@andrehouse.org

(no drop-in's, please)





André House

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

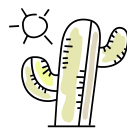
The Open Door



**Join us every First
Friday for Mass and
a Potluck Supper at
1203 W Polk at
6:30 pm**



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



André House Needs:

Summer Focus Items!

- ⇒ Bottled water (cases of individual bottles)
- ⇒ Powdered drink mix
- ⇒ Shampoo (all sizes) & toiletries
- ⇒ Chapstick, ibuprofen, vitamins, etc
- ⇒ Sunscreen (especially travel sizes)
- ⇒ Men's Jeans (especially sizes 30-38)
- ⇒ Deodorant
- ⇒ Men's tennis shoes (sizes 8-13)
- ⇒ Men's & Women's Underwear (average sizes)

