

The Open Door

From the Director

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



Fr. Eric Schimmel, C.S.C.

As we continue in this special 25th Anniversary year at André House, I want to start on a note of gratitude. We were blessed to have a wonderful celebration of our Silver Anniversary Jan 8-10. As I reflected on those events, the word “thanks” stays in my heart.

I thank the Lord for the many ways that God wants to teach me about Divine Providence. We had a couple of potential problems with the anniversary celebrations pop up just before and over the weekend. But just as soon as they came up, God provided the solution. OK, maybe not always as fast as I wanted, but God provided - just as always God does with the rest of daily life and ministry here. So, first, thanks go to God.

Toilets...	2
- by A Hurney	
Heaven ...	3
- by C Armstrong	
The Open Door...	4
- by M Pratt	
25th Anniversary	6

I also want to thank all the people who worked hard and those who prayed hard – and those who did both – to make the weekend a success. Even if you were not able to be here for one reason or another, know that your presence was felt.

Throughout the weekend, many stories were told. They helped me to further appreciate the deep love and compassion of so many of you for our guests and for this ministry. I also grew in my appreciation of the deep roots that André House has – not only here in Phoenix but also in the hearts of many in so many other places. The founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross wanted his priests, brothers and sisters to touch hearts. Even if you do not think you can take credit for that here, the comments of guests and volunteers alike this weekend convinced me that **everybody** connected to André House somehow has touched the heart of someone in a positive way. Thanks for doing that.

On another very positive note, just after all of the articles for the last newsletter were sent to the printer, we received fantastic news. On Saturday morning, Dec 19, 2009, Pope Benedict the XVI acknowledged as scientifically inexplicable, a healing due to the intercession of Blessed Brother André Bessette, CSC. The vice postulator for the cause of the canonization of Brother André, Father Mario Lachapelle, CSC, indicated, “The road to the canonization of Brother André is now open!” We rejoice together that this holy man for whom André House is named will soon officially be declared a saint. The Pope announced that Brother André will be canonized a saint in Rome on October 17, 2010.

Finally, I am not going to pass up an opportunity to ask something of you. We are now in the holy season of Lent, a season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. The alms certainly help, and fasting is always good for the soul. Please keep those up. But what I really want to ask for is your prayers. While many identify this time of year as Spring, and others focus on it being Lent, it is also the time of year when many who are considering spending a year or two in service at André House or with other service organizations submit their applications, interview, and discern where God is calling them. Please pray for the people who are discerning joining Core Staff next year. I ask that you pray in a special way that we have the people that we need, and that they feel clarity in their call to be here.

God bless,
Fr. Eric



TOILets...Nothing Short of Spectacular!

-by Ali Hurney

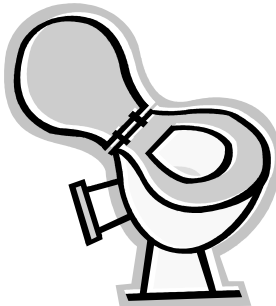
It is funny...I never realized the word toil was in the word toilet. I never really thought I would spend so much of my time with my face in such close proximity to a toilet. I clean toilets three nights a week, approximately 2.5 bathrooms, and sometimes TWICE a night. Oh yes, for a year give or take. [(3 nights x 2.5 bathrooms) x 2 times per night] x 52 weeks...I don't really think I want to solve that equation!

That is a lot of toilet scrubbing.



Honestly, when I came to the André House on my Spring Break trips and even on my interview week, I was excited to clean bathrooms. My friend Kate, from Emmanuel, and I would RUSH to see who could finish a bathroom first. It reminds me of those "games" one would play in a middle school bathroom. Educators try to make learning fun by adding a little competition. However, at the end of the day the students are still exercising their brains while I am exercising my patience...tolerance for pungent odors...my toilet brush?

Monday is my favorite gate night. Katie, Charles and I are on. It is our first full day back at work and by 6:30pm we are, well, overtired and our patience is long gone. Our second week here I had to help Charles snake a toilet. By "help" I mean hold the pole like structure down while scrunching my eyes shut so I



would not be a witness to what exactly we were "snaking." It is right between 6:30pm and 7:00pm when I personally hit my stride. The day looks a little brighter (I am cleaning toilets...everything else HAS to look rosy,) and the events and funny tidbits of the day come out. "Sunshine invited me on a picnic today!" or "Greasy Italian showed up again." It is the first chance we get to catch up on how everyone's day was; whether we are rejoicing or venting.



Also, it is a big stress reliever. I am so worn out by 6:30pm on Mondays that everything becomes a little more entertaining. My personal favorite is when Katie starts singing about the overalls in Mrs. Murphy's chowder, while mopping the hallway.

It is also very rewarding to be met with five smelly bathrooms, and perhaps overflowing toilets, and miraculously leave them cleaner and without toilet paper and used razors strewn everywhere.

Additionally while shouting to one's roommate/co-worker/close friend, "HEY! Come look what I found in the ladies room!" how can one be mad or upset? There is so much beauty in the world, and while it cannot always be found in an André House bathroom, the experiences I have had while cleaning them are nothing short of spectacular.

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Heaven at André House

-by Charles Armstrong



Recently a guest came up to me while I was handing out tickets for our Soupline and asked me a question which I have been reflecting about ever since. “Do you know where Heaven is?” I said no. He said, “It is where God is, and God is here, so we are in Heaven.” Often, while working at André House, God reveals Himself in quite profound ways. This particular instance was one of those times.

Of all the people at André House...staff, volunteers, guests...it is our guests who can bring us closest to Christ, and how we choose to interact with our guests reveals our willingness to love. I say that because our capacity to love is truly tested; it is not always easy to love here. Of all the good that we do, all the hard work, long days, difficult situations, if they are not done with loving hearts then it does more harm than good. There are guests who are easy to love and those who are hard to love. As scripture says, if we can't love the people in front of us, who we can see and touch, how can we love God in Heaven who we can't see and can't touch?

One of the Core Community members read a reflection by her friend Laura McCarty about allowing ourselves to be helped. One of the ideas in the reflection was that our life should be God-centered, and our life's goal should be to grow closer to God, and we cannot do that without humbling ourselves by admitting that we need other people's help. We need other's friendship, support and encouragement and in that way they bring Christ to us, and we grow closer to God through their loving help. This drew me to take a more serious look at the question, “Do you know where Heaven is?”

If we choose to love our guests and let them help us by ministering to us and being Christ on earth to us, then what the guest said to me while I was passing out tickets should be seriously considered. I am humbled so frequently at our guest's faith. This particular man was so confident, God must have been so happy.

Bishop Olmsted offered Mass at André House last month as part of our 25th Anniversary celebration. The Bishop's homily stuck with me. First he outlined Br. André's meek upbringing and his resulting humble spirit. The Bishop then compared Br. André's meek and humble saintliness to that of André House and illustrated the ways in which André House accurately carries on that same spirit of simplicity and love. The Bishop said that, because of the mission of André House, the angels must be acutely aware of what goes on at André House, and I believe he is right.

In the Gospels Jesus orders evil spirits to leave people, and they do. These situations illustrate God's infinite goodness. He can do anything, and He wants the best for us. We should feel good because every time that we do not judge someone else, every time we do not gossip, every time we help a guest, directly or indirectly, we are choosing good, and we are making a choice to love God and not evil, and the angels smile at us. Jesus says that the measure by which we measure others will in fact be measured out to us. So my question is, do we love or do we judge? Are we in Heaven?



The Open Door of Hospitality

-by Michelle Pratt



my favorite gate and really one of my favorite shifts at André House. In case you are not familiar with it, back gate is where people leave the building after dinner. When “doing back gate,” the staff person there mostly says goodbye to guests who are leaving, asks people to throw away their cups before exiting, and tells a few people they have to go around to the other side of the building to get into the dining room. The thing I love about back gate is that is where I see the most gratitude from our guests; or perhaps, that is where I am best able to focus on their gratitude and the acceptance of and appreciation for that gratitude.

At back gate, I see everyone leave after they have finished their dinner and have been satisfied by it. It is the most natural place for people to give thanks for the meal which they received from André House. I did not prepare that dinner or even help in the serving of it in any way. Yet, I am the person who is available to receive that thanks. Being able to do this really reminds me of how grateful people are for what we do. I am at a place where I can be overwhelmed by the gratitude of our guests. It can be such a small thing, that thanks, but it is also such an

The Open Door logo for André House, which looks like it has two doorways, has always reminded me of back gate. Back gate is

amazing thing. Many of the people who eat with us will be heading to the overflow shelter to sleep or will be staying outside for the night. They do not have a whole lot to be thankful for, and I suppose that makes them all the more thankful for the meal that we provide. Whatever the case, it warms my heart to see this gratitude, and it is an honor for me to accept it. I see the job of back gate primarily as one of hospitality in acceptance of this gratitude. This is certainly one of the easiest acts of hospitality at André House because of how rewarding it is, but that doesn't make it any less important. In fact, this exchange with our guests allows them to give us something back for the gift of a meal which they have received and helps us build bonds of appreciation for each other.

Besides the customary “thank you-you're welcome” exchange and a good number of “God bless you's,” I hear some other appreciative exchanges. I smile at everyone leaving. Some people smile and nod back. “Good spaghetti,” people say on a Tuesday, or “The gou-

lash was really good tonight,” on a Saturday. “I'll be seeing you again after I go around,” I hear at least a dozen times. Eventually, I hold Guillermo's cane for him to help him get down the stairs. Guillermo needs a cane to help him walk, but only one of his hands works, so he cannot hold his cane while he's grabbing onto the banister going down the stairs. “Monday?” he asks on Saturdays, wanting to know if he will see me at Mass on Monday. I try to explain to him that I will see him at Tuesday's Mass because Monday is my day off but that there still *is* Mass on Monday.

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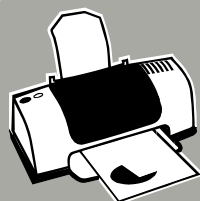


The André House “Back Gate”

The Open Door of Hospitality - *Cont'd from previous page* -by Michelle Pratt

On Tuesdays it is, "Kitchen tomorrow?" and I assure him that, "Yes, I will be making dinner Wednesday." By this time, I am telling people to have a good night as they leave or letting people know that, yes, they can make it around one more time if they go quickly.

While it seems that "An Open Door of Hospitality" would imply the *front* door, I find the term more visibly manifested at the back door. I do not mean to discount the idea of the hospitality of welcoming people in and providing for them. This, also, is something we do at André House. However, I find it appropriate that the Open Door logo reminds me of back gate, because it is there where I see the greatest *exchange* of hospitality. That exchange between our guests and our staff and volunteers is beautiful, and it is what our ministry has been built upon for 25 years.



OLD INK CARTRIDGES?

André House happily accepts your old printer ink cartridges & old cell phones. See below for donation address & times.

Check out our website at www.andrehouse.org for a complete list of items we need. THANK YOU!



OLD CELL PHONES?



DONATION ADDRESS & TIMES:

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

Mon - Thu	10:00am to Noon & 1:00pm - 4:00pm
Fri	CLOSED
Sat & Sun	1:00pm - 4:00pm



Fun, friends & fellowship were found everywhere throughout the weekend.

25th Anniversary Celebration!



The gang's all here!
Well, almost "all here!"



A couple of the little ones got "carried away" in the excitement!



Mike Baxter, Co-Founder, (top pic) & Fr Eric, Director, (left pic) speak to attendees.

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* & want 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 contact Teresa Hipp:

Email: coordinator@andrehouse.org

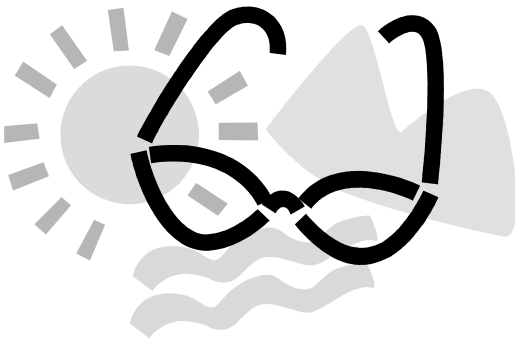
Phone: 602-255-0580 x302.

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?



As the snowbirds head home, the school groups break for the summer and people head off to vacation, André House typically needs volunteers during June, July & August. Beat

the rush to get your service hours in for next Fall by coming in and helping us this summer! Email or call to schedule your time or if you have questions...

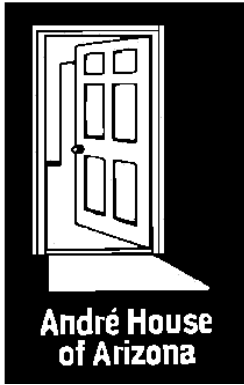
Teresa Hipp, Volunteer Coordinator

Phone: 602-255-0580 ext 302

Email: coordinator@andrehouse.org

(no drop-in's, please)





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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
Polk at 6:30 pm**



Non-Profit Org
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André House Needs: Spring Focus Items!

- Sunscreen (esp travel sizes)
- Men's Jeans (especially sizes 30-38)
- Men's & Women's Underwear (esp larger sizes)
- Deodorant
- Cough drops, ibuprofen, vitamins, etc
- Men's white tube socks

