

The Open Door

SPRING
2011

From the Director



Fr. Eric Schimmel, C.S.C.

As we move into Spring here at André House, we are preparing to welcome many people who will come and spend time with us in ministry. Every year we have groups of college students join us for Spring Break. Instead of going to places that advertise fun in the sun and other entertainment, these students choose to spend a week ministering with us at André House. Often they find that our guests give back to us more than we feel like we give to them. In January we had two wonderful groups each spend a week with us over their Winter Break. One from King's College in Pennsylvania and the other from Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts. One of our reflections in this Newsletter comes from a Bridgewater student who shared this reflection with us at the end of her week here. We wanted to share it with you. Between Feb 27 and March 22 we will have groups from St. Anselm and Dartmouth, both in New Hampshire, Emmanuel College in Massachusetts, St. Edward's in Texas, and Notre Dame in Indiana.

Yes, that is a lot of people coming to help. One of my joys as Director of André House is welcoming and sharing our ministry with people who are eager to serve. Just as life-giving for me is helping people understand that when we minister we try to avoid an "us - them" attitude. Most days I see the guests ministering to each other – helping each other in the clothing closet, explaining to other guests how to access services (either here or elsewhere), offering advice and/or encouragement, the list can go on. Of course by no means do all people who come to volunteer at André House come with an attitude of "I will minister to them" without a sense of potential reciprocity. Still some people in their initial foray come with minimal to no expectation of finding so much latent hope. My heart always rejoices when I see the transformation happen as people realize that our guests and other volunteers have so many gifts to offer, and how freely they sometimes share their gifts.

In this season of Lent, I am taking some time to reflect again on the Constitutions of Holy Cross. I know that part of my joy in these transformations comes because I see that what we are doing here is definitely God's work – recognizing the dignity and potential in all people. But I also rejoice that people at André House can live out the Constitutions of my religious community that say:

As disciples of Jesus we stand side by side with all people. Like them we are burdened by the same struggles and beset by the same weaknesses; like them we are made new by the same Lord's love; like them we hope for a world where justice and love prevail. Thus, wherever through its superiors the congregation sends us we go as educators in the faith to those whose lot we share, supporting men and women of grace and goodwill everywhere in their efforts to form communities of the coming kingdom.

One of my constant prayers, especially in this season of Lent, is that our community at André House will be a living sign that women and men of goodwill can form a community reflecting God's kingdom of heaven.

On another note, in the Fall I wrote that we had received a grant to install photovoltaic (solar) panels on the transitional houses to produce electricity. I am happy to report that those panels have been installed.

Finally, we are also in the season in which people are discerning whether they are called by God to join us on the Core Staff of André House next year. I ask for your prayers for their discernment so that we may again have the blessing of a good Core Staff continuing our mission.

God bless,
Fr. Eric

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God's Blessings

-by Br. Richard Armstrong, CSC

Br. Richard's article was featured in the "Choices" November, 2010, issue. "Choices" is provided by the Congregation of Holy Cross Office of Vocations. The issue was a compilation of reflections on St. Brother André.



St. Br. André Bessette, CSC
Drawing located in
André House Dining Room

This is a story about God's blessing for all His children and their perceived response. Throughout my twenty-four years of ministry at André House, I have been awestruck by the answer I receive when I ask our guests, "How are you?" The overwhelming answer is – "Blessed." My experience at André House

tells me that many of these people have been victims of discrimination, violence and under employment or unemployment. Many have in the past, or presently, suffer the effects of alcoholism and drug addiction and other negative "powers" that affect their lives.

Through their daily efforts of responding to God's blessings, they often struggle. We, too, are blessed by our Father. Like the poor and homeless people who come to André House, we are called to respond in actions of love every day.

Saint André's life is the embodiment of a person responding to God's blessing. He suffered disappointment and the pain of rejection when his application to become a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross was rejected. Later, through the influence of the bishop, he was accepted into the

Congregation. In the eyes of the world, being a doorkeeper was not a job of status. Just think, when was the last time you noticed or remembered a doorkeeper? But as a result of his faithfulness to God's call, sharing God's blessings with others, Br. André was canonized by the Church.

There have been many times in my life that I have struggled to recognize God's blessing and gifts. I often feel powerless and wonder what my place is in God's plan. As I sat in St. Peter's Square on October 17th, I thanked God for the example of Brother André's life. His life demonstrates that we can make a difference in the world if we act faithfully to God's call. I pray that each of us will respond to God's blessings, by living a life that is marked with actions of love and respect for humankind.



Banner of St. Brother André Bessette, CSC
St. Peter's Square
Vatican City, Italy

In Your Own Soul

-by Elizabeth Diedrich



Every day at André House, I have the opportunity to hear the stories of the people that we serve. These people are my friends - Dan, Hector, Allen, etc. I enjoy seeing them every day, checking in on each other and supporting each other through challenging times. I hear about their kids, finding an apartment, their job search, and often stories from their past. Some - although fewer than you might think - are addicts, dealers, or have committed violent crime.

Hearing a person's story is a privilege, but it can also be a burden. There are times I find it easier not to know too much about a person's past. When I hear the worst stories about drugs, prostitution, murder, violent crimes, I can quickly judge the act (especially extreme acts) and the person together.

The past week was difficult on the street. There were two stabbings and one reported death. I know the first guy who was stabbed. I have known him for two years. I know he gang raped a 14-year-old girl. I have seen him fight guys half his size. He is violent, manipulative, angry, and two-faced. Honestly, I don't really like this guy, and sometimes I feel some acts are unforgivable. This man survived the stabbing, but I could not honestly pray in thanksgiving for his life or pray for his healing and recovery.

Yet, I was reading a prayer by Thomas Merton last night:

*So instead of loving what you think is peace,
love others and love God above all.
And instead of hating the people you think are warmakers,
hate the appetites and the disorder in your own soul, which are the causes of war.
If you love peace,
then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed –
but hate these things in yourself, not in another.*

Merton's prayer reminds me that I must first judge myself; I must reflect on my interior life and exterior actions before judging others. As I see this man – and so many others addicted, dealing, and violent – I know that I hold the same sins in my heart.

There are definitely things in my life that I am addicted to and would not easily give up. Daily internet access and coffee come to mind as things I am addicted to. There are things in my life that I "deal." I have more than once been called an 'enabler' by my friends when it comes to food and drink. Although I am not normally violent, there are times in my life where my anger towards others has been greater than my love towards others.

It is easy to judge people who have already been judged by society and seem so different than myself. It is as I reflect on my own shortcomings that I see that I am not so different than those that I quickly judge. At the most basic level we are all sinners, we all have areas that need work. Christ came to forgive all of us, no matter the sin, no matter how big or small, we are all welcomed into the forgiving arms of Christ. From my daily experiences, I know that I cannot change the addicts and dealers that I see every day, but I have the power to continually change myself. I have the power to look at my interior life, see where I fall short, see the qualities that I quickly judge in others, and attempt to better myself. If I so desperately wish for a more peaceful world, I must first call for a revolution in my own heart.

The Last Judgment

-by Valerie Bemann



The decision to give one year of my time and talents to André House was the result of many events I had experienced in the past five years. After

resigning from a diocesan parish, grieving a divorce, and losing my home, I was starting over. I knew I needed to give life back to life. Enlightened, I answered my new calling. I returned to school to study Human Services and discovered how vulnerable and susceptible to homelessness, poverty, and despair I was as well as all humanity. Nothing on earth protects humanity from the circumstances of life on earth. My calling was to a higher level of responsibility as the Body of Christ. "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink." (Mt 25:35).

The everyday life of homelessness and living in poverty is a struggle, and witnessing the guests struggling for a better life is an eye opener.

Searching for jobs, learning to write résumés, acquiring proper clothing, and remaining positive during despair can be overbearing on the self-esteem. The pressure to use illegal drugs and alcohol to deaden emotions and escape reality look tempting for an individual struggling to make a better life for him or herself. Watching drug dealers prey on the homeless because of the vulnerability is sickening to observe. André House, as an advocate for the despairing, provides guests with faith and support; an island of refuge in a sea of despair. "I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me." (Mt 25:36).

Life at André House is renewing for both me as well as the guests. We celebrate Liturgy every morning; we share meals and break bread; and, we build community all in the name of Christ, our food, drink, and hope. We also open the doors and welcome all in the name of our patron Saint, St. André Bessette. "I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me." (Mt 25:35-36).

Come join us by celebrating humanity, giving thanks to God, and bringing light to the world.



The Christ of the Breadlines 1950
By Fritz Eichenbert

*"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing,
I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."*

(MATTHEW 25:35-36)

Easter Activities

Please join us for the following celebrations throughout the Lenten Season.

Holy Thursday

We will offer to wash the feet of our guests during Soupline. Volunteers welcome 5:00pm-7:00pm to help set up, wash feet & clean up.

After Soupline, we will have dinner at our Transitional Houses (1203 W Polk). At 8:30pm there will be the Mass of the Lord's Supper, including washing of the feet.



Good Friday

We will have our traditional Stations of the Cross ceremony. Please meet at the Capitol parking lot at 5:00pm.

[Please verify times beforehand by checking our website Events Calendar at www.andrehouse.org & clicking on News & Events.]

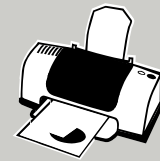
Easter Sunday

11:00am Mass at Transitional Houses (1203 W Polk)

1:00pm Potluck - bring a dish to share



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!

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

Actions Speak Louder than Words

-by Kayla Harvey, Bridgewater Student

The following reflection was written by Kayla Harvey on January 12, 2011. Kayla is a student at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts who served at André House through the school's 2011 Alternative Winter Break Program.

The phrase, "Actions speak louder than words," best exemplifies the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. As the gospel of Mark states, Jesus proclaimed the "Good News" and spread messages of love and compassion through His teachings and miracles. The staff and volunteers at André House perpetuate this very action-oriented ministry of Jesus through their dedication to serve the homeless and impoverished in the Phoenix area.

In the short time that Bridgewater has been here, it has been easy for us to feel God's presence and see that presence manifested through our daily work. I felt God the most on Monday evening when I was serving the main dish in the Soupline. All of the guests were grateful and overjoyed, but one guest, in particular, was especially grateful. While I was scooping the turkey casserole onto his tray, he said, "The work that y'all do here renews my faith in Jesus Christ, and that's why I love coming here." The interaction with that man has definitely been the best part of my stay here so far.

Whether handing out a sleeping bag, serving in the Soupline, or just offering a smile and warm "hello" to a guest, the staff, regular volunteers, and average college students who travel here to serve during Winter Break (like me) spread God's love through their actions. We are proof that truly, "Actions speak louder than words." Through our actions we embody the same spirit Christ himself had over 2000 years ago.



BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY



ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK 2011 GROUP MEMBERS

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, then 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:

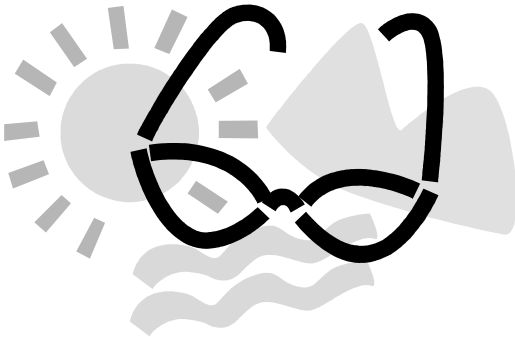
Email: coordinator@andrehouse.org
Phone: 602-255-0580 x302.

If you leave the information in a 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**.

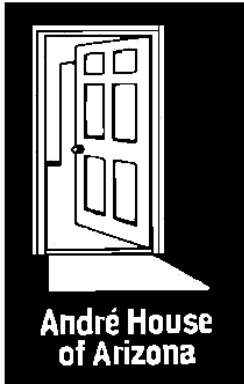
Beat the rush to get your service hours in for next Fall by helping this Summer!

Email or call to schedule your time or if you have questions...

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

(no drop-in's, please)





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 Potluck at
1203 W Polk
6:30pm**



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



André House Needs: Spring Focus Items!

- Bottled water
- Sunglasses
- Shorts & summer clothes
- Men's jeans & black pants (sizes 30-38)
- Belts
- Backpacks
- Men's & women's underwear (larger sizes)
- Men's white tube socks
- Men's tennis shoes (sizes 9-12)
- Deodorant
- Cough drops, antacids, ibuprofen, vitamins, etc

