

The Open Door

SUMMER
2012

From the Director



Fr. Eric Schimmel, C.S.C.

André House is a place of blessings, and seeing guests succeed is my favorite blessing. For example, since our last newsletter, a couple of guests who stayed with us at the transitional houses found employment, saved money, and moved out on their own. We also have had guests who used our services at the Main Hospitality Center return to thank us for the help we provided, and tell us about their apartment, work, etc. A couple apologized for not being around so much, but we assured them that it is quite OK. It is nice that they feel welcomed and that we are part of their story, maybe even part of their family. We often feel they are part of our lives too. Still, it is always a blessing to see people escape the clutches of homelessness. Their stories of success help us to be people of hope.

I know it is well after Father's day, but that summer holiday reminded me of two stories of guests who have touched my heart. One was a guest at the Polk Houses who, while with us, took care of some legal issues, saved money, and returned to Texas to help take care of his teenage children. The other is a guest who returned to the soupline at the main building. We had not seen him for a while because he had been deported to a country south of Mexico. He risked his life to return here - almost dying both in Mexico and in the U.S. desert - so that he could find his wife and help care for their newborn son. These men doggedly pursued their vocation as fathers, accepting risks and challenges to find ways to be with their children and to care for them. Knowing too many stories of men who have abused self and others, and knowing too many men who seemingly abhor commitment, I am uplifted by these men of commitment, love, and faith. They made me reflect on God's love. If these simple men can persistently seek to find ways to help their children, how much more God the Father of infinite love will stand by us and persistently pursue us to help and guide us!

Another blessing for us has been the Summer Staff. We have 7 people who will spend time with us this summer. They are doing a tremendous job! In the enervating heat, it is nice to have the extra hands. We are also blessed to have 5 people for Core Staff next year. Annie will continue with us for a second year, while Christina, Giancarlo, Kelly and Rachel will join us starting August 3rd. That night, Friday, August 3rd, we will have a **Mass and potluck at the Polk Houses, starting at 6:30 pm**. This Mass will be a welcome to the new Core, and a farewell/thank you to Alicia, Joe, Lauren, and Liz as they leave Core. Please join us for this celebration. (See pg. 11 for details.)

God has also blessed us with progress on building projects. Some may have noticed new energy efficient lighting in the Main Building. I find them to be brighter than the older, outdated ones. Other work has taken place at the staff houses. St. Br. André with his friend St. Joseph have been doing a great job helping us accomplish these projects.

People have asked whether our numbers have decreased. We have actually found demand for some services increase this calendar year. We have given away almost all of the blankets collected last year - distributing almost 2,000 to date. Although people still ask for blankets to protect them while they sleep on burning concrete, we had to stop giving out blankets June 1. Blanket requests also go up sooner than you might think in the Fall as the temperatures drop at night. We will need blankets. We also dream of a car donation as one of ours just died. Other needs can be found on a list in this newsletter. We know that God has blessed us with great support. We trust that we will never lack what we truly need. We pray that you may feel God blessing you too.

God bless,
Fr. Eric

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Reflecting “On the House”

- by *Joseph Canarie*

Most of our volunteers are familiar with the services we offer at our Hospitality Center—showers, clothing, laundry, phone calls, blankets, work boot vouchers, toiletry kits and, of course, soupline—but many are unaware of our transitional housing program on Polk Street. Since André House’s humble beginnings 27 years ago, the transitional living program has been at the heart of what we do.

Our houses provide shelter for individuals who need a place to stay while they find work and save enough money to rent their own place. Most of our guests stay many months with us, searching for work, working, and saving. As Core Staff members, we know these individuals well. We learn their life stories as a result of eating with them each night at the transitional houses on Polk Street and through overnight shifts “on the House.”

Some stories haunt me because they sound so familiar. I cannot help but think “there, but for the grace of God, go I.” Others shock me because they are so far from anything I have experienced, jolting me with a new awareness of my privilege. Still others manage to do both at the same time. Jen’s was such a story.

I liked Jen right away. She had a great sense of humor and brought the

whole dinner table to stitches with her jokes. I soon realized that Jen and I had a lot in common. We had similar tastes in movies and television. We both loved music and both regretted not continuing to make music after high school. One night while on an overnight shift “on the House,” I also learned that Jen and I had both come out as gay during high school. We had many stories to share about the ups and downs of being out during those years, but the similarities stopped abruptly as Jen began to share her experience coming out at home.

Jen’s mother and stepfather did not handle her coming out with the love and understanding my parents had. They repeatedly attempted to “talk her out of” her lesbian identity.

Every morning before school meant another argument about Jen’s attire. Her mother stopped helping her get to and from her band rehearsals and extracurricular activities, and she eventually made home life so uncomfortable for Jen that she began to perform poorly in school. A’s and B’s became C’s and D’s. Without her musical friends, Jen found herself hanging out with the wrong crowd. Soon she dropped out of school and ran away from home, her dreams of

(Continued on page 3)



Reflecting "On the House" *cont'd*

(Continued from page 2)

attending college gone. "There but for the grace of my loving parents, would I have gone," I remember thinking.

The stories that followed revealed the intersection of barriers to success my privileged self could never have imagined: racism, classism, homophobia, violence, unemployment, incarceration and an addiction used to mask the psychological pain Jen felt. Learning all this about Jen made her ability to laugh and be joyful all the more remarkable to me. I felt the familiar lurch in my stomach: Jen's life is like nothing my privileged self could ever imagine.

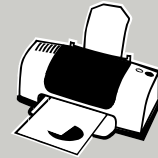
I will never forget the awareness of privilege I gained from stories like Jen's or

the realization that I could so easily find myself knocking at the door of 1203 West Polk Street, inquiring about a room.

If you have never been to Polk yourself, I encourage you to stop by sometime or to accept the invitation to join us for dinner after soupline. You, too, may find yourself listening to a story that may change the way you think. If you are not able to visit, I encourage you to pray for our guests in their search for a living wage and stable housing. I also hope that you would pause to reflect on the privilege you have been given, examine it critically, and pray about how you could use it to make a difference in the lives of others.



OLD INK CARTRIDGES?



Please donate your old printer ink cartridges to André House. See below for donation address & times.

For a complete list of needed items, click on the Donate link on our website: www.andrehouse.org.

THANK YOU!

DONATION ADDRESS & TIMES:

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

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



My Mother's Hospitality

- by Elizabeth Diedrich



I love having my mother visit me at André House. I love bringing her to the Hospitality Center, showing her what I do on a daily basis. I love introducing her to volunteers and guests.

I remember the first time she visited; we were working in the Pascente office together. A guest came in and asked for a bar of soap. My mother proceeded to take out the entire box of soap and asked the guest what type of soap he would like. My mother explained each bar of soap, the smell, the texture, the size, etc. until the guest found just what he wanted. I remember the guest at first being confused, but

the genuineness in the way my mother responded to a request for a bar of soap relaxed the guest's initial reaction and lead to a beautiful exchange.

On another visit, I planned a trip to Tucson for my parents. I found coverage for my shifts and organized the short day trip. Instead, my mother informed me that she would much rather bake 600 cookies from scratch. We gathered ten pounds of flour, five pounds of real butter, oatmeal, sugar, chocolate chips, sprinkles, and peanut butter. We made chocolate chip cookies, peanut butter cookies, sugar cookies, and oatmeal bars. Growing up in my mother's house there was never a day the house did not have a homemade baked good. She did not think André House should be any different

On her last visit, I introduced my mother to one of my favorite guests. Christopher lost his leg in Kuwait, yet came back to build a successful career as a landscaper until complications with his prosthetic did not allow him to work. He lived in his car in Phoenix as he received medical treatment at the VA hospital. The day my mom visited, he received his new prosthetic leg. I was excited and hoped to see him that day. As my mother and I walked over, he broke down with tears of joy. He had a new leg, a brand new pair of shoes, and could almost walk without his walker. So my mother hugged him. For a long time he cried, and she hugged him. A homeless man living in his car, crying in our parking lot, and my mother's first reaction is to embrace him.

At André House, we say we have a ministry of hospitality. This is a ministry of welcoming, sharing, loving, embracing, caring, and accepting all without judgment or trying to change. I came to André House after receiving undergraduate degrees in Applied Mathematics and Philosophy. I am a very heady person who values rationality and efficiency. There have been many times in my life I have failed to recognize or understand the other side.

These three examples are reminders of the many lessons I learned from my mother's example at home. I know it is because of my mother that I am at André House, and I am able to do what I do each day. Her many lessons of hospitality allow me to step out of my headiness and embrace a softer approach. My mother's example continually leads me to grow in the ministry of hospitality. Her example reminds me to slow down and ask, "Which bar of soap would you like today?"



Immersive Conversations

- by Kayla Harvey, Summer Service Staff

A large part of my University's mission statement centers around "cultivating compassionate individuals to make change in their communities and beyond." Throughout various aspects of student life and academe, our campus community works to equip students, faculty, and staff with the proper tools to work to effect positive change and inspire those beyond our campus perimeter to do the same. However, though we make great attempts to "cultivate compassionate leaders" through various programs and campus initiatives, it's often hard to try to unify others around such an ambitious and ambiguous goal because everyone has a different idea about what compassion means.

In January 2010, I participated in my school's "Take a Break and Make a Difference" program, which sends groups of students and staff to a plethora of service sites throughout the United States and the world. The program sent me and nine other students to André House. I immediately fell in love with the ministry here at André House because of the way staff and volunteers are able to immerse ourselves in the experiences

of the guests.

The ministry of André House best exemplifies my favorite explanation of compassion from Henri Nouwen. In his book *Compassion*, Nouwen explains compassion as the "full immersion in the experience of being human." I think that Nouwen really touches on the true goal of compassionate action, which is to dignify those in our lives who may



need us. In our ministry at André House, we strive to share this form of compassion with our guests through our hospitality.

One of our most basic services is to converse with our guests. Just by engaging in meaningful conversations with them at our main building or at our transitional houses, we are able to gain deeper insight and understanding of their lives and stories and vice-versa. Conversations help us to gain better insight into the struggles, successes, stories, and lives of our guests. The basics of compassion revolve around the concept of understanding the situations of others. I have found that there is no better way to understand another person than by striking up a conversation with a friendly hello.

Inside and Outside

-by Annie McAlevey & Elizabeth Diedrich



We spend most of our day inside. We eat inside. We sleep inside. We go to church inside. We use the bathroom inside. We socialize inside. We work inside. We relax inside. When I choose, I go outside. Sometimes I go outside just to go between two inside places. For me, being inside is the norm, outside is a choice. I choose when I go outside. I choose where I go outside. I choose how long I am outside, and I choose when I come inside.

For many of our guests, their lives are just the opposite. If you ever saw the Breakfast Club in the André House parking lot on Saturday morning, you would see a preacher and band in the middle of the lot leading a worship service, and guests lined up on benches eating outside. Hot or really hot, they pray and eat outside. As we leave the building at night, we pass many of our guests making a bed on the sidewalk or in a car preparing to sleep outside. As we see guests waiting for dinner outside our building, they are reading, playing cards, etc. They socialize and relax outside.

Many of our guests have no choice when they can go inside. They can go inside when a building is open based on someone else's schedule, and they leave when someone tells them to go back outside.

We are part of the in crowd; they are part of the out crowd. The stigma that this creates causes a divide between them and us. As André House staffers we try to live simply. We receive a modest stipend; we have clothing from the clothing closet; and we eat the same food as our guests. Yet, there is still a divide between our lives.

This inside – outside divide is more than physical location. Inside means safe. Outside means danger. Inside means comfort. Outside means discomfort. Inside means known. Outside means stranger. Inside means welcomed. Outside means foreign. This divide goes beyond basic comforts and leads to a judgment and displacement of those who are already suffering.

So what do we do about this? How do we bridge this divide?

Anthony Gittins writes in his book *Ministry at the Margins*, "Our [baptism] calls us to move from the center of our familiar worlds of meaning and to encounter other people and other worlds. Its purpose is to make us sharers and bearers of hope, to enable us to offer moral support, and to engage in a mutually enriching search for the deeper meaning of life. Its outcome is us believing more urgently and more fully that the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith have relevance and provide a key to open human hearts and offer Godly wisdom and life."

For it is when we step outside ourselves, it is when we meet people at the divide, that we are able to encounter the other and see who we truly are.



Humility

-by Lauren Rogers

One of the many things I love about André House is that we strive to provide dignity to every person that walks through our doors. Whether they are a guest, a volunteer, or a staff person, each has a different story and is very unique in his or her own way. We try to meet each person where they are and welcome them into our family. In the short two years of serving at André House, I have learned a true sense of humility...going from a "them and us" attitude to a "we" attitude.

One way I found the true meaning of humility happened on Holy Thursday. Every Holy Thursday our guests have the opportunity to have their feet washed by staff and volunteers as they come into the building for dinner. We wash their feet with warm water and body wash. They have the options of foot powder for their shoes and lotion for their feet before we put on a clean pair of socks. It is truly beautiful. I coordinate Thursday Soupline, so most of the time that night I was running around ensuring dinner was going well. At the end of soupline, I saw one of our regular guests, Miguel, sitting in the main dining room by himself. Miguel is from Cuba, speaks very little English, and is an amazing artist. He has drawn several pictures while sitting in the Pascente office, and we hung them on a bulletin board in the Family Dining Room for others to see. I walked over to him that night to tell him that we had put up his pictures, and he said something I could not understand.



I asked him to repeat himself. He asked me if I knew what humility meant. I said yes, and realizing he had tears in his eyes, I sat down next to him. He said, "Tonight I washed someone's feet, and I now have humility in my heart." Instead of having his own feet washed, he had washed those of a staff member and was deeply moved. He took my hand and held it for a few minutes in silence while tears rolled down his face. Afterwards, he patted my hand and said, "Thank you, Lauren," and left.

I reflect on my encounter with Miguel often. Sometimes I find myself doing a particularly rough job during my day such as cleaning a really dirty bathroom or having a difficult encounter with an unhappy guest. I think about how Miguel found Christ's humility as he washed someone else's feet on Holy Thursday. I try to remember to find Christ's humility as I continue to serve all who come through the doors of André House.



“911...Where’s Your Emergency?”

- by Joseph Canarie & Sr. Adele O’Sullivan, MD, CSJ



“Ms. Jones is a 52 year-old female who was admitted to the hospital for repeated bouts of uncontrollable cardiac arrhythmia. After an unsuccessful ablation on Tuesday, she was implanted with an on-demand, internal pacemaker yesterday. The procedure was successful. She is recovering well and, seeing that Ms. Jones’ history is otherwise unremarkable, she can be discharged to recover at home.”

This discharge summary may seem run-of-the-mill, but it fails to take note of an important piece of Ms. Jones’ history: she is homeless. For her, “discharged to recover at home,” will mean “sent to recover on the streets.”

If you had heart surgery, where would you go to recover after being discharged? Who would be there to help take care of you? What resources would be available to you?

Despite being one of the largest cities in the country, Phoenix has no place where hospitals can safely discharge homeless patients who need supervised care during their post-hospital recovery period, and no place for hospitals to refer homeless patients who seek treatment in the emergency department, but who do not meet inpatient admission criteria.

As a result, our guests who are discharged from the hospital often face overbooked shelters and hot streets. Unable to recover, many get sicker and must be readmitted, bringing unnecessary suffering and further medical debt. This was the case in the story of Ms. Jones, an André House guest. After spending hours in the hot sun trying to get to case management, Ms. Jones made her way to André House in hopes of finding a place to rest, cool down, and eat. However, Ms. Jones never made it into the dining room. While she was walking up the ramp she collapsed, turned blue and slipped momentarily into cardiac arrest until her internal defibrillator fired and paramedics were able to start treatment in the parking lot. Ms. Jones was then readmitted to the hospital.

Without the availability of respite services, sick homeless individuals are forced to compete for space in overcrowded shelters that are ill-equipped to provide for their needs. Crowded environments create risks for transmission of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, influenza, and wound infections. Hospitals or their emergency departments discharge patients directly to shelters because they have no other alternative. Staff in the shelter system cannot be expected to care for persons who are sick, and yet are put in the position of accepting them or turning them out on the street. This problem looms large for those who are providing services to victims of domestic violence in our city. If the shelter staff are not able to accept a new client because of medical needs (e.g. after an assault), it may be that the only option a victim has is to return to the abuser.

If shelter placement is not possible, homeless persons may be forced to recover on the street, where their medical issues are compounded by exposure to the harsh realities of homelessness. It is hard to imagine the difficulty of recovering from any illness or injury without a bed to rest in, available bathroom facilities, or adequate nutrition. For those who suffer from mental as well as physical illness, the situation is overwhelming. Sick persons experiencing homelessness, their companions, the shelter staff, or even bystanders call 911 when a homeless person requires assistance. While some calls are true emergencies, many others would be unnecessary if the person had access to necessary medications, a safe place to rest, and a basic level of care. This scenario, besides diverting Fire Department personnel away from locations where they are actually needed, places a large and unnecessary financial burden on this public resource.

The current situation creates a financial burden for hospitals, shelters, police, and other emergency responders. The burden in terms of human suffering is incalculable.

(Continued on page 9)

“911...Where’s Your Emergency?” *cont’d*

(Continued from page 8)

In order to address this injustice, Sr. Adele O’Sullivan, MD, CSJ and her team at Circle the City have been working for over five years to develop a medical respite center for the homeless. The brand new center will open later this summer to serve those who are most vulnerable after being discharged from the hospital.

The Medical Respite Center will be located at 333 West Indian School Road, in an area near the large central Phoenix hospitals from which many patients will come. At capacity, the center will accommodate 50 patients. Beds will be arranged in a dorm-like setting of 10 beds per room. There will be a spacious day room and dining room, physical therapy area, small barber/beauty shop, and interfaith chapel. Two exam rooms are included within the facility, where medical care will be provided. Special consideration has been taken in planning the female residential area in order to accommodate the security needs of patients with issues related to domestic violence.

Patients are expected to stay in the Medical Respite Center from three to six weeks. During this time, they will receive medical and nursing services as well as case management. They will be provided a clean bed, hot shower, and three nutritious meals per



Sr. Adele working with a homeless man in The Zone

day. Case managers will work with each patient to offer supportive services as well as to locate any housing options which may be available after discharge.

Construction on Circle the City’s Medical Respite Center should be finished next month, and the program expects to be accepting patients by the first of September. To find out more about Circle the City and how you can help their effort, visit their website at <http://www.circlethecity.org/>.



About Sr. Adele O’Sullivan, MD, CSJ

Sr. Adele has been a physician for **Healthcare for the Homeless** in downtown Phoenix since 1996. In 2000, Sr. Adele became the program’s Medical Director. Her work with and for the poor and homeless has been tireless.

She received the Family Physician of the Year award from the AZ Academy of Family Physicians, was honored in 2006 as the American Family Physician of the Year by the American Academy of Family Physicians, and in 2008 Dr Adele was honored with the Caring Award from the Caring Institute. She has also been featured in Reader’s Digest magazine for her good works.



(Photos and Sr. Adele’s information provided by St. Patrick’s Catholic Community blog.)

Do you need Community Service Hours?

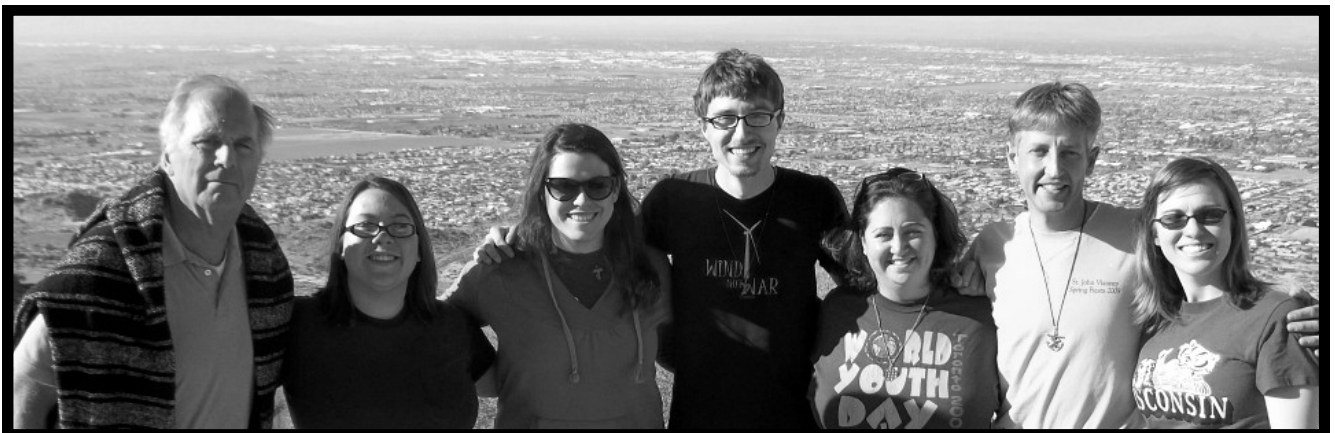


André House will be in great need of volunteers during July, August & September. As the snowbirds head home, the school groups break for the summer and people head off to vacation, we will have many service opportunities in the Soupline. Beat the rush to get your service hours in for next Fall by coming 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)



Br. Richard

Alicia

Annie

Joe

Lauren

Fr. Eric

Liz

2011 - 12 Core Staff Members

Mailing List



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



Does your name or address need to be corrected?



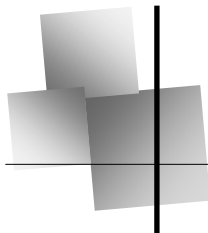
Are you reading a friend's copy of *The Open Door* & wanted to be added to our mailing list?



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

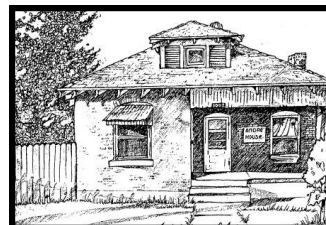


André House

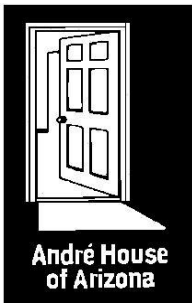
"Hello! ... Good-bye!" Mass and Potluck

Please join us in welcoming our 2012-13 Core members and wishing the past year's Core a fond farewell and thank you!

Date: Fri, Aug 3rd
Time: 6:30pm Mass
Place: 1203 W. Polk St.



*This will be held at our Transitional Homes.
 The potluck will immediately follow Mass.*



André House

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

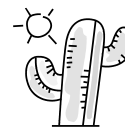
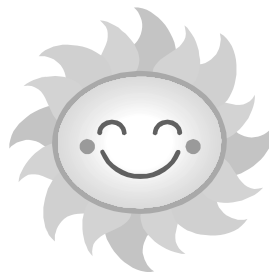
The Open Door



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



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André House Needs:

Summer Focus Items!

- ⇒ Sunscreen (especially travel sizes)
- ⇒ Men's Jeans (especially sizes 30-38)
- ⇒ Shampoo (all sizes) & toiletries
- ⇒ Men's & Women's Underwear (ave sizes)
- ⇒ Socks
- ⇒ Men's tennis shoes (sizes 8—13)
- ⇒ Deodorant
- ⇒ Chapstick, ibuprofen, vitamins, etc
- ⇒ Blankets

