

THE OPEN DOOR

FROM THE CORE COMMUNITY OF ANDRE HOUSE

FALL EDITION 2016



In this issue: A letter from our Executive Director, Fr. Tom Doyle, CSC;
Reflections by Fr. Chris, CSC, Lindsey Meyers, Tyler McGhee, Cooper Nagaki,
and Debbie Shane

A letter from our Executive Director

Fr. Tom Doyle, CSC



The guests of Andre House are lifted by the prayers and carried on the shoulders of our amazing volunteers. Day in and day out, the Andre House community is filled by people from all over our valley with faith and generosity beyond measure. Each evening meal we serve requires approximately 30 people to prepare, serve and clean-up afterward. Most of America thinks of serving the poor on Thanksgiving Day; it's a powerful generous sentiment. But it is on New Year's Eve, July 4th, or July 31st (the 30th consecutive day with temperatures above 100 degrees), Labor Day weekend and the other 362 days a year that the character of Andre House volunteers radiates. The abiding and personal commitment of volunteers, many of whom have been coming regularly for decades, lift our guest's bodies, minds, and souls.

On the eve of the canonization of Mother Theresa, Pope Francis addressed a diverse group of volunteers who reach out to people experiencing economic, social and spiritual poverty. He called them "artisans of mercy," whose hands, voices, closeness, and caresses help people who suffer to feel loved.

Andre House volunteers are just such artisans. People whose commitment is personal, and extends beyond the "shift" of service. A woman who spoke to a guest who needed only size 11 boots to begin his employment showed up the next day with boots having raided her husband's closet. A retired corporate executive shows up weekly, just in time to "glove up" and assist cleaning our bathrooms and spends the rest of the evening at our exit gate collecting "God Bless You's" from our guests as he wishes them a safe night. Another retired executive fills in by answering the phone and returns each call while one of our permanent staff is recovering from injury. A creative, generous person who comes weekly to assist with the distribution of clothes hosted a beautiful baby shower for one of our staff. A young man who had court appointed service hours still comes almost every evening . . . six weeks after he had completed his required hours.

Artisans of Mercy indeed! Humble, generous, brave souls who have all felt pain in their own lives and thus feel the pains of those struggling with poverty every day of the year. How blessed is the world for the broad shoulders who carry our guests every day? Blessed beyond measure.

Peace,

Fr. Tom

The picture on the cover is a stained glass window that is now located in our main dining room. It was given to us by St. Jerome Parish and involved the coordination and hard work of Ted and Joy Dunne, and Jim Day. It is a perfect addition and truly represents the daily bread that is broken and shared at Andre House.



A Time for Everything

Reflection by: Tyler McGhee



Two months into my time here at the André House, the most apparent difference between “the zone” and “the real world”

would be the truly real conversation that takes place. On a day-to-day basis, I find myself listening to the deepest personal stories of trauma, struggle, conflict, and resilience. There are histories of how people had transitioned to their position today, and how they’re seeking to better their lives. There are others who have decided to tell me their reasons for wanting to live on the streets, whether it be friends, addictions, a desire to be countercultural. Regardless, it has become incredibly normal to listen to such deep impactful stories, almost to the point where I expect to hear of someone’s abuse or abuses, of their most recent serious medical condition, or their frustrations with another guest. These stories are intermixed with the simple small-talk, what all social beings must have; however, here at André House, the number of stories regarding deep, troubling human affairs is always higher than the regular chit-chat that I encounter on my off-days with folks who have jobs, who have homes, who are relatively safe and secure both physically and mentally. This chit-chat, as far as I’ve perceived, doesn’t contain as much sorrow, grief, or hope as the stories of guests at André House. These realities are what must be shared and understood before substantial change can be made to the

structures that help people transition out of poverty and homelessness, but in the day-to-day they are not the stories or the struggles that are shared. Other things take precedent, and these difficult topics are pushed to the side for later discussion.

How can a balance be struck in daily life, to provide enough time and space to reflect on the deep and difficult as well as the simple and fun? Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 says “there is a time for everything,” and all can be spoken about in their right time. No person would ever want to live their life solely focusing on the pains, struggles, and realities of the world; we all need a break from these topics to relax and find simple enjoyment in life! On the other hand, no person would ever desire to speak and think only of the enjoyable and the surface-level topics: humans are profoundly social creatures that, I feel, have a deep desire to recognize the suffering of themselves and others, find ways to mitigate the hardship, and create lasting changes to prevent it from happening again. There is a balance in the middle, and I feel it is necessary for us to focus more on the injustice, the conflict, and the realities of the suffering in order to make truly impactful change to our social perception and structural integration of people experiencing homelessness. The level of pure truth and openness at André House cannot be matched. I only hope that any volunteers that come and witness these raw, passionate stories (or anyone reading this blurb), can push themselves towards having more conversations about the problems in our communities and our society. There is a time for everything.

“You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.”

--Thomas Merton



Margaret Gillespie, a long time Andre House Volunteer and member of our Board of Directors from 2013-2016, passed away on May 20, 2016. She attended The University of Notre Dame and graduated in 1977. After graduating, Margaret and Paul married in 1977 and eventually moved west to Arizona where they raised their family. Margaret went on to obtain her MBA and JD from Arizona State University. Margaret was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother and avid supporter of Catholic Education regardless of financial means.



The Hidden Hands of Andre House *Fr. Chris Letikirich, CSC*

If appreciation is so important, why do we show it so rarely? No matter the job we have or the industry we work in, we are all hungry for praise and starving for honest appreciation. Question! When was the last time you were appreciated? Or when did you show appreciation to your family, friends or even colleagues at work? I believe it was Shakespeare who said, "Gratitude is the memory of the heart." After this year's Foot Washing event on Holy Thursday, Andre House started a volunteer appreciation program. Appreciation comes in many forms, such as knowing our volunteers and benefactors, keeping them updated, organizing mini retreats and seminars for them, praying for them, sharing a meal together and celebrating Mass for them (usually on first Friday of the month). However, in this article I would like to express on behalf of Andre House administration and the Core, our deep and sincere appreciation to our unsung heroes. When visiting Andre House you will at once experience peace, order and a great deal of cleanliness in and outside of the building. It is easy to attribute all this good work to the Core staff whose stories and profiles are well captured on both our Facebook page and website. Their work is seen by all, since their duties and responsibilities put them in direct contact with both guests and volunteers. But there are hidden hands behind the scenes that often go unnoticed. We want to acknowledge that their extra effort, their keen

attention and dedicated effort bring laurels to Andre House. We celebrate: Ted Dunne, Margaret Butterly, Nathan Rey, Jimmy Donnelly, Richard Meade, Mickey, Tony Quick, Emeka Iloeje and many more that are not mentioned in this issue. We would be remiss if we did not appreciate them. Though they are quiet and hidden from our volunteers, their work is not unnoticed.

Ted, you are invaluable to Andre House, you are a gem, a man after God's own heart. Your humility and saintliness set you apart. Frederick Koenig has it that "happiness comes not from getting something we lack, but from the recognition and appreciation of what we do have." I agree, I don't know what we would do without you. According to the Dalai Lama, the roots of goodness are in the soil of appreciation for goodness. You have been and continue to be too good to us, and it is deeply appreciated.

Margaret, Andre House is indebted to you. You are one of the most generous, kind, loving, understanding, forgiving and knowledgeable people we know. You truly are great at what you do. You are not only a great source of information, but you are also a very faith-filled person.

Jimmy, we appreciate your due diligence at work. Your close and cordial relationships with our guests. The way you get really serious when we are talking about the really serious stuff. Your great sense of humor. How you make time for the guests no matter how busy you are. Your simplicity and humility.

Richard, we appreciate your kind heart and generosity. The way you value and take care of your work. That Andre House can trust you completely. Despite life's challenges you have the biggest heart.

Mickey, you are a man of few words, but your work speaks for you. You are a hard worker, and our office area, laundry and the entire building are clean and neat because of your sheer hard work.

Nathan, you are a gentleman and a scholar, a man who knows the true meaning of service, a former U.S Marine and now a Marine for the service of God in the needy and those experiencing homelessness in the Phoenix area. You are a friendly and amiable person, an asset for Andre House, a rock and a true friend. You have a good and kind heart, a deep and sincere love for the needy.

Emeka, you are a true Nigerian with no guile in him, a man who values Andre House as his home. How warm you make our hearts feel every time we see you talk to the guests! We appreciate your thoughtfulness. Everyone is always busy with something, but when someone goes out of his/her way to help others, we greatly appreciate that. We also appreciate persons who smile even though they are going through a rough patch!

In conclusion, we would like to echo what Goethe said: "treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them to become what they are capable of being." You volunteers have treated our guests as though they were capable of reaching the stars and because of your effort, good work and a word of encouragement, they have. When we read what Dickens said, "reflect upon your present blessings," you dear friends come to mind, and that is why we

Cont. page 5

honor you today as the hidden hands of Andre House. We urge all our readers to be grateful to the people who make them happy. We are grateful to these men and women. They have helped us make Andre House, a place of giving, the most wonderful place in Phoenix, the place we all are happy to call home. It is because of this we extend our heartfelt thanks. You have made a difference. God bless you and your loved ones now and always.

And to all our volunteers, benefactors and people of good will: we urge you to develop a strong preferential option for the poor. And perhaps it's worth mentioning that dinner is our main service. Many of our volunteers in the Phoenix area and beyond come to help, and we love and appreciate all the help that we can get. Many wonder

about helping at other times in the coming months. There are many opportunities to serve; this newsletter and our website are your best resources. There is so much work to do...the poor keep coming. The need keeps growing. At times the work can seem too big to undertake. At moments like these, the Holy Spirit reaches out to men and women of faith and asks us to take up our cross and join our brothers and sisters, and to offer support to this noble mission of the Congregation of Holy Cross. We need not go far to reach out; in every corner of our community there are men, women and children who are calling out for God's mercy. The poor are not only those who lack the material means of survival; the poor also include the lonely, the infirm, the lost, and the searching.

Reflection by Lindsey Meyers



“Andre House is the Church trying,” a good friend, and a former staff person spoke to me recently. She said this after I was telling her of my recent struggle with focusing on the ideal of Christ and His Church rather than the reality of his personhood. I think I often get caught up in ideology— the Church should be

caring for the poor, it should be peaceful, fighting injustice, open to the world. If I take seriously that Jesus Christ was first and foremost a living, breathing human, then when speaking of the Church as his body, the first thing to reflect on is his humanity: human Jesus, human Church. Faith cannot be idealistically expecting the Church to be a certain way— it must be a surrender to the personhood of Christ and his work. Faith must first and foremost acknowledge the fragility of humanity, and the fragility of the human Christ. The reality is that the apostles argued about who was first in the kingdom, Jesus went away from the chaos of his ministry to pray— to then be bombarded with yet another crowd in need, Jesus was hungry and tired.

What does this mean for the work we do at Andre House? It means that just as the life of Christ, things are messy, chaotic, tiring— human. The ideal of the Church with and for the poor must meet the reality of our daily lives. At Andre House, we argue sometimes, we sometimes offend one another unintentionally, we are tired, communication is not always on point— we try to take a moment break to get asked about a blanket or clothing item. Our “Open Door” mission is less of an ideal, and more of the reality

that the human Christ lived a life that was open to the needs of his neighbor— a life that called out to the thieves on his right and left. My prayer is that we strive to do the same. Of course, the reality of our ministry is that things do not always go as planned, that we are tired, fragile, and a bit of a mess, but as my friend Ellen pointed out so poignantly: “Andre House is the Church trying.” Brother Richard often speaks of the “Miracle that is Andre House”— I'd like to think that the miracle of Andre House is the very reality that the work continues to be done in our fragility and weaknesses. The Church as Christ's human body is the Church that has daily routines, that sweats, that gets overwhelmed, that laughs, that cries; it is a Church that understands every human experience. Perhaps, this is the beauty of “The Open Door”— in Andre House's humanity, we are able to be open to the humanity of our guests. Just as Christ's humanity embodied God's complete and utter openness to us, my prayer is that Andre House in her humanity may embody God's complete and utter openness to each guest. This might just be the miracle that is Andre House.





Here I Am
By: Debbie Shane

Here I am...

Waiting outside this door. I have nowhere to go. What will the answer be? If it is no, what will I do?

Waiting to open this door. He is waiting to see me. He is waiting to know if he will be welcomed. Will he be a good fit for our community? Will I be able to tell him yes?

come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at the table in the Kingdom of God.” I believe this is Andre House. The Lord calls His people here from all over.

Some of us come because we have a desire to help other people. Some of us come because we have been called to follow Christ’s missionary ways. Some of us simply come because we need to ease our physical sufferings by finding a meal to ward off hunger, a blanket to protect from the hard environment, or a kind ear to fight loneliness.

The Lord has called us, *His people*, to be here. He wants us to know that we are *His people* and that we belong together. In this place, we learn that physically, mentally and spiritually we long to be with each other. As we learn to live with one another, we learn to love each other as Christ loves us.

We may not be able to describe the exact moment when we realize Christ’s love for us. It may happen as we hear one of us playing the piano in the St. Francis room during dinner or when we are washing dishes. It may happen as we laugh and cry over our personal stories. Every day at Andre House we feel Christ’s presence through the love we share with each other. We feel His presence through *His people*.

Here we are... at Andre House – a place of the Lord’s people.

Here I am...

Dialing the same phone numbers again. It has been over a week. Will the voice on the other end have good news today? Will I finally have a place to stay? Or will I ride the light rail all night, hoping for a safe place to sleep when service ends?

Listening to her talking on the phone. Will they be able to find her a place to sleep tonight? If they can’t find her a place, how will I be able to? How can I keep telling her to try again tomorrow?

Here I am...

Looking at the racks of clothes. So many clothes. Will I find something that fits? Will it look good and not be out of date? Is it too much to hope I can find something in my favorite color?

Waiting to help guests find clothes. There aren’t many shoes today. Someone will be disappointed. I just found these pants; I hope he likes them!

Here I am...

Asking what time it is. The door opens in five minutes. I am hungry. Can you open now? I am tired of waiting. I am so hungry.

Glancing at the clock on the wall. Five minutes until soup line opens. Is everything ready? I can’t open late. It is my responsibility to make sure everyone has a chance to eat.

Here I am... at Andre House.

Guest, staff, volunteer – here we are at Andre House. A passage in the Gospel of Luke reads “... and people will





**Reflection by
Cooper Nagaki**

This year, as I join the Andre House Core Staff, I enter my second year of service. Previously, I worked in a similar program at Brophy College Preparatory. It has not been uncommon in the last two years, after I tell someone about my job, for them to commend me for my sacrifice.

While I appreciate the compliments, the comments always leave me questioning the nature of service and its connection to sacrifice.

To understand what is traditionally meant by the word sacrifice, I think that we must look at what we are giving up, what we are losing. I could have spent these two years at a paying job or performing scientific research to better my resume for medical school. But while these options may have been more profitable for my future, I believe that I am, that we all are, called to a life of service to others. Everything we do, especially our work, should be done for the betterment and growth of others and ourselves. This is what drew me to Brophy, and again what has drawn me to Andre House.

I don't see my work in these places as sacrifice, but rather some form of a fulfillment of the ideal that we as humans are called to a life of service for the betterment of others and ourselves. This may make me seem as if I feel superior or that I am preaching to you. Please don't mistake this reflection for that. I have mentioned this ideal of service, however if I have learned anything in these two years, it is that ideals, no matter how beautiful, aren't great fuel to get us through daily life. As I found out quickly, working

at Andre House isn't always pretty. Actually pretty is fairly rare. I end the majority of my days exhausted, stressed, and upset from work. Sometimes it's so much, I'm left feeling numb. Ask any of the other core staff about how their days go and they will give you similar answers. So what gets us up the next day? What keeps us going?

For me, it has been holiness that I encounter in my work. While we hold mass and prayer services nearly every day, this is not what I mean. Holiness in our work are the moments which can be seen as sacred in the most seemingly insignificant parts of our day. It could be when a guest and I joke about my ridiculous apron, or when another guest and I dance like bull riders while cleaning bathrooms. Andre House provides a variety of services from food to clothes to showers, but I believe that the greatest service we provide to guests is our ability to be with them. It is these moments of connection with others that I see the most profound parts of humanity. When I look back on these moments, my work seems less like service and even less like sacrifice. Like a parent or a good friend, I get to spend my days working with those I care about. It may not be easy, but it does feel somewhat natural. I am continually blessed to spend my days in brotherhood with the guests, the volunteers, and my colleagues.

I will end with a brief note: I know that many of you reading this have volunteered at Andre House before and I cannot thank you enough for that. But I ask that the next time you serve, you see your volunteer work through this perspective and search for those sacred moments with our guests and your fellow volunteers. Even more, if you search for this sanctity in everyday life, I believe that this ideal of mine will begin to seem far more attainable.

White Tanks Memorial Service

November is a month of remembrance in the Catholic Church. Because of this, on Wednesday, November 23rd, the Andre House community of staff, volunteers, and benefactors gather at White Tanks Cemetery in Litchfield Park to remember all of the homeless men and women who have died. This powerful memorial service is a reminder to all of us of the brevity of our life on earth and prepares us to truly give thanks on Thanksgiving Day for the many blessings in our lives.

Every Thursday, deceased homeless and indigent persons for whom no relatives can be found to assume burial responsibilities are laid to rest in the White Tanks Cemetery. Present to honor them are only the members of a chain gang from a local prison, who provide the labor, and a rotating minister or priest to offer burial prayers. The Andre House staff presides over these services several times a year. The service will begin at the White Tanks Cemetery no later than 8:00pm. See our Facebook page or website: www.andrehouse.org for more details.





Andre House
PO Box 2014
Phoenix, AZ 85001
Phone: 602-255-0580
www.andrehouse.org

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

Core Staff 2016-2017

Jessica Lubbering
Elena Lusk
Megan McCormick
Tyler McGehee
Lindsey Meyers
Cooper Nagaki
Debbie Shane

Executive Director
Fr. Tom Doyle, CSC

Associate Director
Fr. Chris Letikirich, CSC

Treasurer
Br. Richard Armstrong, CSC

Director of Volunteer Services and
Communication
Therese Barnhart

Director of Finance and
Administration
Jay Minich

Board of Directors
Fr. Tom O'Hara, CSC
Fr. Tom Doyle, CSC
Br. Richard Armstrong, CSC
Kristen Masloski
Todd Kallmyer
Megan Agliano
Ted Willette
Ron Meyers
Matthew Ellsworth
Greg Herrle
Mike Hanosh
Mike Smith
Leslie Korte

Andre House Fall Needs List

Uncooked frozen Turkey

Blankets

Uncooked Frozen Turkey

Sleeping Bags

Ground Coffee

Backpacks

Uncooked frozen Turkey