



# THE OPEN DOOR

FROM THE CORE COMMUNITY OF ANDRE HOUSE

SUMMER EDITION 2016

## A letter from our Executive Director

Fr. Tom Doyle, CSC

Prior to serving the evening meal at Andre House, 30 volunteers gather in the dining room for prayer and last minute instructions. Frequently I ask, people to raise their hand if they have been coming to Andre House more than 1, 5, 10 or 20 years. Almost every evening, there is a handful of people who have been serving for more than two decades. Wow!

The title *volunteer* doesn't begin to capture the impact of men and women who come day in and day out to provide service and support to the thousands of men and women who come to Andre House for a meal, clothing, laundry, showers or a word of compassion. There is no sufficient amplified synonym for a good Andre House volunteer. In the farewell discourse of John's gospel, Jesus says to his disciples: "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. I have called you *friends*." (John 15:15) The

designation "friend" has been diluted in our time, now only requiring one-click on Facebook. But for Jesus as well as Aristotle, friendship was designated at one of the highest and most noble categories of human relationship. The volunteers who come each day to Andre House are *friends* in the same extraordinary sense that Jesus used to described his disciples. Friends know, as Jesus continues in John 15, what the master is doing.

It is my, the Core Team's and Staff's privilege to serve here every day. But the real heroes of Andre House are our *friends*, the men and women who come faithfully and regularly. With them comes a burst of enthusiasm, a measure of compassion, a large portion of skill and the gifts of insight and wisdom. From you we learn to be selfless and nonjudgmental and patient and joyful and faithful and generous. We marvel by your witness of serving while simultaneously working, raising families and fighting traffic to get here as if lives depend on it. Lives do depend on you.

This newsletter will share financial information about Andre House. Our friends who "volunteer" are essential to keeping our cost per meal to a remarkable \$1.25. But the value of you as friends, as people who live the mission of Andre House with your time, your talent and your resources is immeasurable. Thank you for being our friend.

Peace,  
Fr. Tom

## In this issue

A letter from our Executive Director, Fr. Tom Doyle, CSC, Reflections by Fr. Chris, Therese Fossen, Becca Taylor, Ellen Dowling, Annual Report FY 2014/2015, Volunteer Spotlight

# Living the Gospel

A Reflection by Fr. Chris Letikirich, CSC



*Are you looking for concrete ways to follow our Christian calling to "live the Gospel?" Then, Andre House is the place for you.*

Andre House is blessed to have an incredible team of volunteers who live out the gospel calling to truly "feed the poor" and serve the people experiencing homelessness in the Phoenix Area. Thirty years ago, two Holy Cross priests recognized the need and found a way to meet that need by starting a very modest street-feeding program, which later on grew into what we now call Andre House of Hospitality.

In the beginning, it was difficult to organize a system for transporting turkey soup from friends and well-wishers directly to those in need. Today, Andre House has grown into a non-profit organization that prepares and serves more than 250,000 meals a year! And we are assisted by more than 10,000 volunteers.



If you are looking for a concrete way to serve the Lord, please consider joining us in our ministry to the homeless. Volunteer commitments are flexible and can be selected by you based on your personal schedule. Any and all assistance is gratefully accepted. No volunteering commitment is too small! Some of our volunteers serve once a week, others once a month, and some only once a year. Most of the meal-preparation work involves chopping vegetables, dicing fruits or potatoes, then serving that meal, followed by clean-up. There is no heavy lifting. Most volunteers begin at 3:00 in the afternoon and leave by 7:00pm.

Won't you consider joining us in this much-needed and very rewarding ministry? We can be reached at our Facebook Page: Andre House of Arizona, or on our website: [andrehouse.org](http://andrehouse.org) or [andrehouse.volunteerhub.com](http://andrehouse.volunteerhub.com).

Thank you in advance, God bless, and we'll see you soon.

Andre House relies on **30** volunteers to help prepare and serve the evening meal to over **500** guests - **6** nights a week.

We have **76** Corporate, Church, and School groups committed to a monthly or bi-monthly night of service.

**22** volunteers make a weekly commitment to our day services and morning dinner preparation.

**54** volunteers have checked into **25** or more Dinner Services, since January.

Our top **25** volunteers have collectively logged **2,928** hours since the start of the year.

## SIMPLY FAITH

By Therese Fossen



When I first learned about the Core Staff position at

André House, the tenets of community, simplicity, and service called out to me. This is what life should be. This way of life is what Christ calls us to. He asks us to sell all we have and give the money to the poor. He asks us to live in community and care for each other, to have all things in common. He asks us to live a simple life. This simple life that Christ calls us to actually frees us to know Him and serve Him better. We are not concerned with protecting what belongs to us, but with sharing all that we have with the rest of God's children. In fact, this is what our world is lacking.

We live in solidarity with our guests in many ways through our commitment to simplicity. And yet we realize the limits of our solidarity. What is the difference between any of us and our guests? It's not that we are

better than they. What each of us has that our guests don't have is simply someone to back us up if we fail on our own. We have families, friends, communities with the means to support us in any way we need. Our guests are here, in need of our service, because their communities can't provide for them.

Yet our guests are the ones who teach us to trust God fully despite great adversity. We see in real life how our guests' lives – a whole new level of simplicity – allow them to have such faith and hope in God. We see God acting visibly in their lives daily, sustaining them, providing for their needs, and keeping hope alive in their hearts.

This year I have had the privilege of getting to know many mothers. I have always felt a special connection with mothers and children. I have always wanted to be a mother and raise children. So when God gave me the opportunity to be a mother this year, though I was afraid, I was elated that God chose to answer my prayer. I knew that I had a community both at André House and with my family who will support me through my every need. Yes, I had to sacrifice my pride to make the decision to move back home and live with my parents. And yes, I am so incredibly grateful for their

eagerness to support me. And now I was able to connect so much more with all of the mothers, especially those also expecting new life. And yet I have also been challenged with contemplating the miracle of life versus the tragedy of poverty. My dear friends living in poverty do not have the supportive, enabling community I have. They are fending for themselves in a world that requires them to qualify, and then to jump through a thousand hoops to get help with housing, food, and baby supplies. And if they fail to get their lives presentable, the baby who has been growing inside them for nine months, who they have loved with open hearts, will be taken away from their loving arms. This is the tragedy of poverty.

And yet there is hope. One guest, my friend Ashley, is determined to get it together. I recently accompanied her to an ultrasound, where she found out her 19-week-old baby is a boy. She told me "I am giving my life to God and by the time we meet again I will have a job, a place, and both of my boys." If there is one thing I have learned from the guests at André House, it is that it's never over. No matter what your challenge, trust God. He will sustain you. He will provide. Strive for simplicity, give it all to Him, and He will never let you fall.

**Please help resolve one of the Director's top five causes of heartburn:**

Andre House is in immediate need of a economy car, sedan, minivan or SUV. If you don't think your vehicle is "good enough" consider the following: The average Andre House vehicle is 15 years old, has 92,000 miles and a lot of character scratches and dents.

Any running vehicle below those averages improves our fleet! Thank you!

Please email Fr. Tom at: [tdoyle@andrehouse.org](mailto:tdoyle@andrehouse.org)  
or call 602-255-0580 ext. 301

*"Let us ask this good Savior for a humble heart which know its origin in nothing, a gentle heart which knows how to contain itself, a loving heart which is compassionate to the sorrows of others and eager to relieve them. May we have a pure and faithful heart which will be faithful to its work and generous in fulfilling its obligations, obedient to the counsels of faith and the inspirations of grace."*

Fr. Basil Moreau, C.S.C.

# Annual Report

## FY 2014/2015

Dear Andre House Contributors, Volunteers, Partners & Supporters,

I want to extend my most sincere and heartfelt thanks to each of you for making our mission possible and for investing in the lives of thousands of men and women who need your help most. Your gifts of time, talent and treasure are an inspiration to our Andre House community. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, comments or recommendations pertaining to Andre House financial matters.

May God bless you,

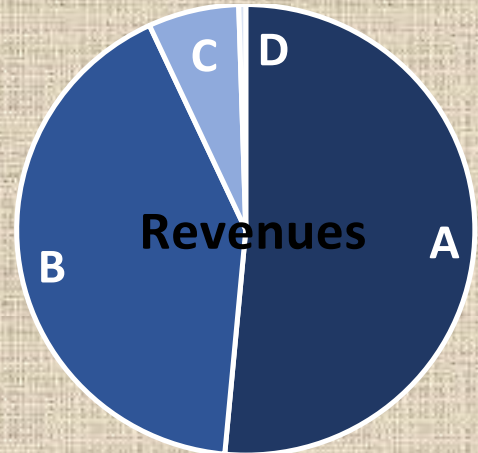
Jay Minich  
Director of Finance & Administration

### Fiscal 2015 Revenues

A	Donor Contributions <sup>1</sup>	51%	\$ 856,740
B	In-Kind Items & Services <sup>2</sup>	42%	\$ 692,971
C	Net Investment Income <sup>3</sup>	6%	\$ 106,761
D	Other Income <sup>4</sup>	0%	\$ 8,210
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>			<b>\$ 1,664,682</b>

Through the generosity and kindness of thousands of donors and volunteers committed to improving the lives of our beloved guests, Andre House was able to entirely finance its operating needs in FY 2015, and generate a significant surplus to continue carrying out our mission of mercy moving forward. As a result of these donations, we were able to provide our guests with 183,000 meals, 7,700 sets of clothing, 7,300 showers, 1,800 laundry loads, 4,000 blankets, 97 lockers, and 27 transitional housing opportunities. This was truly a blessing indeed.

In addition to financing our operating costs, Andre House made \$63,000 of needed capital improvements with these generous donor contributions, including new plumbing/piping in the hospitality center, a new cargo van to drive daily to St. Mary's Food Bank, and new washers and dryers for our guest laundry service in the hospitality center.



<sup>1</sup>Donor Contributions includes financial contributions from individuals, families, parishes, companies, foundations, estates and other organizations Andre House does not receive any government contributions of any kind. All donor contributions except for \$1,165 were unrestricted.

<sup>2</sup>In-Kind Items & Services includes the value of donated food, clothing, automobiles, & financial assets as well as the value of professional, administrative and Core Team services. In-Kind Services does not include the estimated value of volunteer time.

<sup>3</sup>Interest & Dividend Income includes interest and dividends earned on financial assets Andre House maintains.

<sup>4</sup>Net Realized & Unrealized Gains/(Losses) includes both realized and unrealized gains and losses on financial assets Andre House maintains.

<sup>5</sup>Gain/Loss on Disposition of Assets includes net proceeds from the sale of donated vehicles.

<sup>6</sup>Other Income includes primarily fees charged to the Veterans Association for the rental of office space as well as to guests for locker rentals.



## Fiscal 2015 Expenses



E	Meal Service <sup>5</sup>	53%	\$ 699,169
F	Clothing Closet <sup>6</sup>	18%	\$ 243,666
G	Welfare Activities <sup>7</sup>	13%	\$ 176,033
H	Transitional Housing <sup>8</sup>	13%	\$ 116,651
I	Management & General	5%	\$ 62,515
J	Fundraising	2%	\$ 22,915
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>			<b>\$ 1,320,949</b>

<sup>5</sup>Meal Service included food, personnel and overhead costs associated with our nightly dinner service.

<sup>6</sup>Clothing closet included the estimated value of donated clothing, personnel and overhead costs related to the clothing closet ministry.

<sup>7</sup>Welfare activities included material, personnel and overhead costs related to the laundry, showers, office, locker and all other ministries not related to meal service, clothing, or transitional housing.

<sup>8</sup>Transitional housing included operating, personnel and overhead costs of the housing program used to provide temporary housing to men transitioning out of homelessness into independent living.

<sup>9</sup>The meal cost of \$1.24 excludes the estimated value of donated food. If the cost of donated food valued at \$1 per pound is included, the average meal cost equals \$3.75.

Our nightly dinner service continued to be our primary ministry throughout FY 2015, serving 603 meals/night at an average cost of \$1.24 per meal<sup>9</sup>. Our management & general expenses remained very economical at just 5% of total expenses. This is possible only with the 45,000+ hours donated by thousands of committed volunteers, and our extremely dedicated Core Team members.

Each year, Andre House Core Team members make a 1 year service commitment (with an optional renewal for a second year), and receive living accommodations, health benefits, a small monthly stipend and an education award of \$5,500 to be used towards outstanding student debt or future higher education costs. In FY 2016, the education award will be raised to \$7,500 per Core Team member to help offset the rising higher education costs.



## The Essence of Humanity

By Rebecca Taylor

As I finish up my second year at Andre House, I'm not only realizing how much I have grown in the last two years, but how difficult it is to think about life beyond Andre House. Why is that?

I'll first begin with a story.

One Sunday I was walking to work. I can't remember what month this happened, I just know it was year two and it was not devastatingly hot. I wasn't particularly thrilled about heading to work because it was a beautiful Sunday, a picture perfect day with a crystal blue sky, a few large fluffy white clouds, one of those days where it's flat out unjust to be doing anything other than wandering around the desert.

It must have been clear that I wanted to be doing anything other than walking to work, because Jen, an Andre House guest and friend, called me over and asked what was wrong. I said hello and then tried to assure Jen nothing was wrong, but she's not a woman to disagree with. She quickly let me know that my facial expression said otherwise. Then she asked if I was upset because I was walking to work instead of riding my bike. That of course brought a smile to my face. She asked that I ride her bike the rest of the way to work. I initially said thanks, but no thanks, strictly for logistics reason, assuming she needed her

bike more than I, but after insisting, I knew I had to accept. She hands over her beach cruiser to me, big metal chain, lock and key, and off I go. Bikes are a big deal around Andre House, and to be trusted to use her bike, for her to offer me her only source of transportation, wow. Would I do the same?

I am still trying to come to terms with calling the "zone", the area where Andre House is located, community. I feel it might downplay the struggle of being without a home, because when I think of the word community, I feel it comes with an association of comfort and safety. But, in fact, what I have experienced at and around Andre House is community, it is the most authentic and loving community I have been a part of, so much so, it's hard to leave.

Community is a place of struggle, and sometimes even conflict.

We all have some brokenness and fragilities that we try to hide, often because as a society, we are generally not very kind and understanding towards our wounds. We have become so focused on success, and so competitive that we forget about our humanity. We forget about love, we forget about our own weakness, and we turn away from those who wear their vulnerability and openly rely on others. Comfort and safety can be an illusion, especially when it breaks down community, rather than builds community.

What I have learned here is that true community is a place of brokenness, even conflict. I know that doesn't sound appealing to everyone, but we all struggle, and it is in our brokenness and fragility where we come to know ultimate love, the ultimate freedom, where we find God.

Love, forgiveness, reconciliation, suffering, I have seen it all, and what a privilege it is to share the

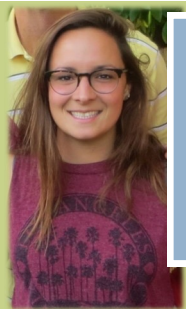
most personal interactions one can have, the essence of humanity, with so many of our guests at Andre House. That's what these last two years have been about, becoming human, through our frailty, and our need for individual affirmation and loving community.

I will miss being greeted every morning as I arrive to the building, especially on those days where waking is difficult and the thought of going to work is unbearable, but then you arrive and are received with love. I will miss walking to work or around the city getting Andre House shout-outs. I will miss locking up the building at night after the meal service and saying goodnight to all my friends. I will miss all of the guests who have taught me what freedom is, the ability to love without fear, without judgement. I will miss each and every one who is a part of this beautiful community.

We have become very fearful as a society, as a world; there are many reasons for that, but please come and see how we love at Andre House. Extend yourself to enter into community outside your usual bounds. If you dare to experience a freedom like no other, open up, share your brokenness, your fragility, and see how you are loved.

Thank you all for being a part of the best two years of my life. I am leaving here a much better person, with a greater understanding of love, of myself, of freedom, and community. What more could one ask for?





## Water is Simplicity

By Ellen Dowling

Water is natural. It is pure, intentional, without pretense. All need water. Water falls from the sky to free us from our desire of thirst. All these things that water does for life, simplicity does for our souls. Simple living – that intentional, disciplined appreciation for the creations with which we are blessed – returns us to our most natural and pure states as humans. We appreciate others and accept them in all of their humanity. We can humbly accept ourselves in all of our humanity, and can be freed from our material desires. We can become pure, intentional, without pretense. We can appreciate the beauty of that rain falling and recognize the beauty in all humans and all things.

Water can be used to create hierarchies and social injustices throughout the world. Water can be wasted. Water can become polluted and undesirable. We too can use our lifestyles as a means to create hierarchies and social injustices throughout the world. We start wasting our resources and shut other people away through clouded visions of judgement and hatred.

Khalil Gibran wrote that we should not say “God is in my heart” but rather that “I am in the heart of God”. When we live simply, we can no longer confine God to certain aspects of our life that are convenient...we are free to experience God in all people and in all things. And we cannot help but to be in communion with creation when that happens. Simplicity is how we come into our truest existence. Simple living is freedom. Simple living allows us to fall into the deep, deep water of God’s love.



## Volunteer Spotlight

On Holy Thursday, 30 volunteers came and washed hundreds of worn out feet of our guests before they went in for their meal. “If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.” (John 13:15) The humble acts of service, instituted by Christ, are the way that we approach the mission and privilege of our ministry every day of the year. Holy Thursday is the prism through which we see every day. Thank you for being a part of Andre House and the underlying mystery that directs every day of the year. Following is a reflection of Holy Thursday of which you are a beloved part.



“I think that washing of the feet is a perfect physical sign of the best part of Andre House: the intimate community we celebrate. I had one very special interaction on Holy Thursday with a guest who I believe understands this better than I do. I had the pleasure of reconnecting with a guest that I hadn't seen in a year and a half. As we were catching up he told me, ‘there are so many beautiful places in Arizona that I've never been able to visit because I'm homeless and in and out of jail. I've never been to the Grand Canyon, or Sedona, or hiking in the mountains...but it doesn't matter, because Andre House is more beautiful than any of those.’ That's why anyone shows up at Andre House, either guest or volunteer, because we're a family and we're there for each other. It's a beautiful thing.” - Jessie Liebner



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PO Box 2014  
Phoenix, AZ 85001  
Phone: 602-252-9023 or 602-255-0580  
[www.andrehouse.org](http://www.andrehouse.org)

## The Open Door



We are thrilled to announce that our building is now air conditioned! This is one of several units that was recently installed in our main dining room. It will provide much needed relief from the brutal heat to our guests and to our volunteers who come faithfully during the summer to help prepare and serve the evening meal.

We are especially grateful to the many donors who gave so generously toward this life-changing project; it would not have been possible without you! A very special thanks to Ted Dunne, our Director of Maintenance and to Burt-Burnett and Donnelly Air Conditioning. Good on you!



### The Phoenix Bridge of Books

A passion project started by Quinn Harrison, a guest of Andre House

The role books have constantly served in my life is to enlarge my capacity for empathy. I believe a book is one of the best mediums to convey a story, fiction or nonfiction, which can enlighten one's mind. Books have the power to unlock unique and unknown potential within their reader to the benefit of the entire human race.

The idea for The Phoenix Bridge of Books came to me a few months prior to my release from prison. I began observing what my fellow prisoners valued most is correspondence/communication (letters, emails, phone calls) with friends, family and real people from the outside world. Additionally, I witnessed that many, before being released, experienced anxiety and even fear about returning to the 'real world', primarily how they, as felons, will be perceived by others.

With those observations, I imagined a way I could kill three birds with one stone. First, send a personal correspondence, second, have it come from a mixed bag of members of the 'free' community and, a bonus third benefit, the sharing of a book would serve as a bridge. Blending these three notions I came up with The Phoenix Bridge of Books and went about preparing the foundation, getting approval from prison administrators and collecting inmate contact information that would support my efforts upon my release.

For more information and to get involved Email: [quinnharrison@gmail.com](mailto:quinnharrison@gmail.com).  
Blog: <http://phoenixbridgeofbooks.blogspot.com/>