



THE OPEN DOOR

FROM THE CORE COMMUNITY OF ANDRE HOUSE

WINTER EDITION 2016



Merry Christmas from your friends at Andre House!

Jessica Huebner In Love
Bro. Richard

Richard Meier
AUSSIE

Emeka Iloje

Alabris, etc
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Andrey Myer et

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Mina

Michael Jones

Megan Melanick

Elena Lusk

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A letter from our Director of Volunteer Services

Therese Barnhart



Six days a week there are thirty to forty volunteers who travel to Andre House to spend time with us in service. Some arrive in the mornings to help with day services, donation sorting or kitchen preparation. Others, arrive in the afternoon to begin the final preparations for the evening meal.

We wait in anticipation of their arrival because we know the day immediately brightens when they enter our building. We enthusiastically welcome them! We look forward to the stories and pictures they share; the laughter and joy they bring; and the spirit of humility, compassion and grace they carry with them as they walk through our doors.

Similarly, we celebrate the Word made flesh - *with anticipation and enthusiasm*. Our volunteers exemplify what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Here, St. Teresa of Avila rings true, "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through

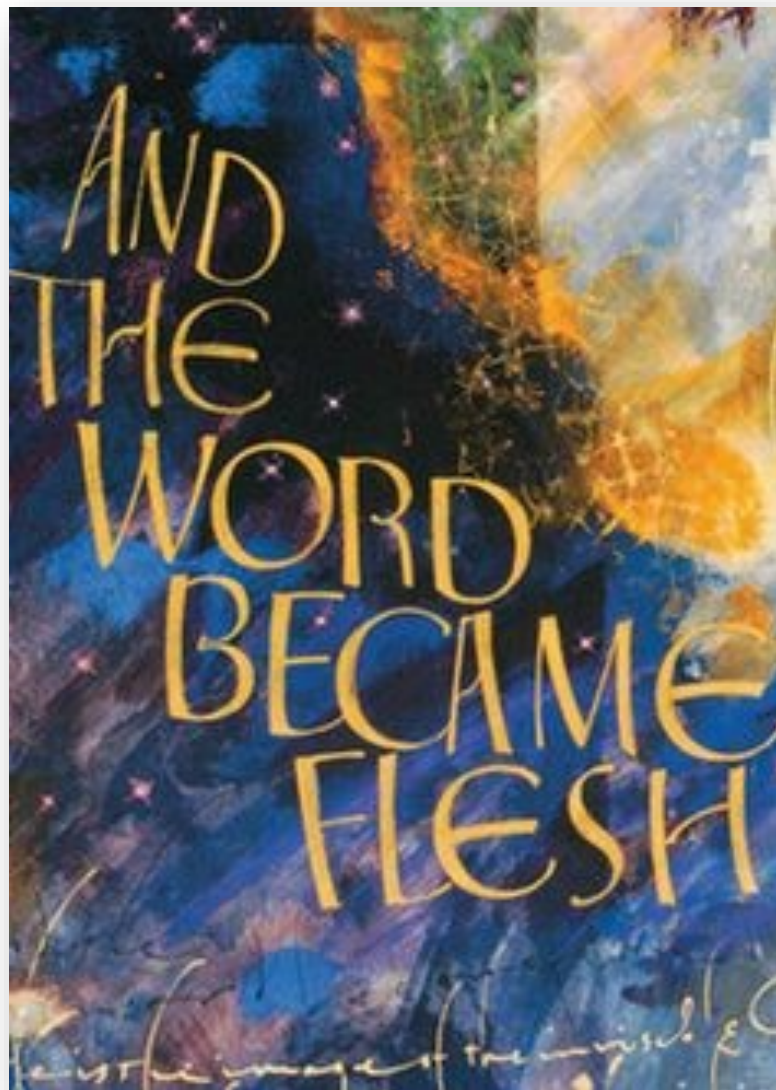
which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

As we near the end of another year, it is typical to spend time reflecting on the past and the many blessings that have been received. This past year at Andre House, we have 2,932 *blessings* to be grateful for. This is the number of individuals who have been the hands and feet of Christ with our guests and the staff at Andre House since the beginning of the year. It has been a great privilege to be a witness to such goodness, kindness, generosity and love.

The final newsletter of 2016 is not only dedicated to our volunteers but it is written by them as well! Please enjoy their thoughts, reflections, stories, and photographs. It has been a joy to minister with each one of you as, together, we carry out the mission of Andre House.

Peace and joy to you all!

Therese



Monday night crew!

Hello to One and All!

My name is Arnie Meltzer and I am a 69 year old retired, relatively new volunteer that hails from the Chicago area (YAY CUBBIES!!!) I've enjoyed being here in the Phoenix area for about 4 years. My faith tradition is Jewish, because I've spent so many years of my life studying all faith traditions, I have had the chance to worship, and participate with one of the ministries at St. Patrick's Catholic Community Church in Scottsdale. From serving at St. Patrick's, is how I came to learn about Andre House and it's incredible mission.

After a meaningful first interview meeting with Therese Barnhart, I was convinced that Andre House was where I was supposed to serve. I help with dinner service on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings. WOW! What a Fun experience for me! Not only do I get the privilege to work with all the different brothers and sisters in need, I also get the chance to meet hundreds of other committed and like minded volunteers!! Win! Win! Meeting with and working side by side with Fr. Tom, Fr. Chris, Lindsey (Thanks sooo much for teaching me the "Spaghetti Dance" on Tuesday night! Ha Ha!) Liz, Cooper, Jessica, Elena, and all the other Energetic Core Staff members has been an Honor and a Blessing for me personally. I am truly grateful to The Lord for this unique chance to serve.

I'm a BIG FAN of St. Teresa of Calcutta who stands as an unending inspiration to us all!! Two of my favorite quotes of her many written are as follows:

1. "Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies"
2. "Let us always meet each other with a SMILE, for the SMILE is the beginning of LOVE"

Thanks, once again to all at Andre House for helping to get me settled in. I HOPE I will be able to serve for years to come.

Arnie Meltzer (I'm Smiling in Gratitude right at this moment!!)



Dennis and Barbara Whitmer
Tuesday morning prep



My Experience at the Andre House By Mary Reitz

It has been an honor and privilege to be a volunteer at the Andre House this past year.

Working as a team preparing the meal brings joy to my day. I admire the staff that is there every day meeting the needs of many by providing clothing and toiletries, doing laundry, making arrangements for appointments and addressing numerous other requests.

Serving a meal is only part of the opportunity to share God's love. Taking time to listen to another person's challenges or joys and encouraging them is truly a gift. We are the hands and feet of Jesus to those in need. Giving hugs or pats on the back transfers love and healing between giver and receiver. Getting to know some of the regulars by name I keep them in my prayers and look forward to seeing them.

How can I give back for the many blessings I have received? For me, it is doing my best to love and bless others by my words and actions. As we celebrate Thanksgiving it is a reminder to have a thankful heart in all circumstances.

Thank you Andre House for being there and treating each person with dignity that walks through your doors.

ANDRE HOUSE REFLECTION

By: Jill Green

Washington High School's Interact Club is all about service. With over 300 members and over 100 events a year, this campus club admits that Andre House is their favorite event. It must be because they have been coming on Thursday nights for the last 16 years.

"We are a group that truly believes that service comes before self," sponsor Tami Strege said. "In serving others, we recognize the need to be an active member of a global community. The value of serving others allows us to recognize the gifts that we have received ourselves."

"Our student volunteers have life-changing experiences at Andre House," sponsor Jill Green said. "Interacting with the guests and the staff presents the teenagers with an enlightenment that they can't get anywhere else. It instills a life-long commitment to community service."

Whether they are cutting up vegetables, serving burritos, washing dishes or chatting with the guests, Andre House certainly has had an influence on student lives.

"Andre House has impacted my life in ways I never thought possible," senior Nikole Gomez said. "Andre House has change my once narrow view of the world by allowing me to grow not only spiritually but also as an individual. It is my favorite place to volunteer because it gives me the opportunity to be the difference I want to see in the world.

Senior Carmen Cazares agreed that Andre House sparks her passion for volunteering. "Andre House has been an amazing eye opener for me as I spend time with people who need the most," Cazares said. "Thursdays have become my favorite day of the week due to the inspiring people I get to meet and serve."

The guests' words have stayed with these teenagers and have opened their eyes to their community.

"Going to Andre House has changed my life by offering a look at the struggles of homelessness," junior Cynthia Caballeros said. "Last night, a guest told me that 'I should learn from volunteering, so I won't be on the other side of the serving line.'" I will never forget what he said.

Junior Abril Lerma has also had her eyes opened to "both the beautiful and the harsh realities of life."

"The last time I went, a woman teared up as she thanked me for my service and said it was the first meal she'd had that day," Lerma said. "Seeing her gratitude warmed my heart, but it also helped me broaden my gratitude for the blessing I have in my life."



ANDRE HOUSE REFLECTION

By: Kim Witzak

The Estrella High School Interact Club loves working at Andre House. A lot of students join Interact so they can work at Andre House. The main reason they want to work at Andre House is "to feed the homeless." They feel that it helps them to be grateful for what they have in life and want to be able to help others have a nice day in some small way.

Personally, I (the sponsor) feel it helps me when I think how bad things are going in my life to see that my life is pretty good. It's extremely cliché but it is the truth. In the three years I have personally been coming here with club members, I have never heard anyone complain about the work or anything that has happened while they are here. They can't wait to come back and do it all over again.

We love Thursdays because we love Jessica!



Volunteer Appreciation Mass, November 6, 2016



WHY DO YOU COME TO ANDRE HOUSE? AND, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN COMING?

"My home is blessed with the love of Christ. Working at Andre House gives me the opportunity to thank God and to put back for the many blessings He has bestowed upon my family" Don Pucci—6 yrs.

"I have been blessed with a great life and wanted to give back to others less fortunate. I have found I receive more than I give here at Andre House. It's like a second family!"
Al Steen — 1 yr.

*"We enjoy the friendship of so many volunteers and look forward to helping others – we appreciate how hard the core staff works with the guests and their dedication year after year."*Kathy and Jim – 16 yrs.

*"I just believe in giving back and this is the way I like to give back."*Mary Lou Cecilio – 8 yrs.

"We are all called to serve"— Deacon Jim

"I love it and get so much from the guests."
Flynnie Meyers – 18 yrs.

*"Feed the poor."*Ron Meyers – 32 yrs.

"To give all the staff a big relief by working the pit and making sure they have the volunteers they need for dinner."
John Chavez – 2 months

"Amazing way to do the work of the Lord!"
Mary Detke – 2 yrs.

*"Love, positivity, and sharing our paths and stories. I love Andre House!"*Brittney Trombley – 1 month

*"To serve those in need."*Sandy Meyers – 32 yrs.

*"It gives me a way to keep busy and to serve."*Steven – 7 yrs.

"To tithe from life, not just the wallet, and for the cookies."
Katelyn – 10 yrs.

*"This is an amazing, amazing place! All of the Core staff and volunteers are wonderful!"*Emma Power - 1 month

"To put one foot at purgatory's gate! Keeps me grounded"
Frank Bell – 14 yrs.

"I've been coming for 14 yrs. I serve my brothers and sisters and see Christ in them especially in their eyes. I have the same feeling as when I am a minister of Eucharist at Sunday Mass."
Peggy Bell – 14 yrs.

“THANK YOU FOR CALLING ANDRE HOUSE. HOW CAN WE HELP?”

By: Mary Lou Bessette

We hope every call is a compassionate conversation closer to dignity and hope.

Margaret Butterly or Emeka Iloeje answers Andre House phones. I helped out during the blistering Phoenix summer. Voices of the homeless and the people who want to help are in this amalgam of snippets from my call log.

We need somewhere to sleep tonight... I live in my car. The re-po man just took it.... My mother kicked me out because I'm gay... My boyfriend beat me up for the last time. I'm leaving now but I have no place to go...

So goes the litany of the poor and homeless—day after day. We invite them to evening dinner and daytime services. We guide them to neighboring service partners for temporary and transient overnight shelter. Callers tell heartbreaking stories. Some are adrift in chronic homelessness. Drugs and alcohol damage most. Many suffer illnesses of body or mind. Bad decisions or bad fortune yields horrible consequences. All face nightfall without certainty of a bed or shelter.

When they discharge me from this hospital, they will give me a cab ride to a shelter. Where can I go? ... I know my head is seriously f'd up, but I'm sane enough to know that nobody should be left on the street when they leave a hospital..."

Indeed. The first calls about the practice of “dump and run” leave me dumbstruck. Literally. “What do we say to them?” I ask the wise priest who shepherds Andre House with goodness and kindness. He says our community must come together to find a compassionate, concerted path so everyone discharged from a hospital has a predetermined place to heal, a recovery plan and caregiver-advocates to fulfill it. We must do better.

My Uncle Jake lives with me. He's down on his luck and trying to get back on his feet. I can't keep him any more. He needs housing.

Andre House's transitional house may help Jake. The house is home for six sober, clean men who are able to work and abide by a 7 p.m. curfew.

Finally, my brother got a job! He needs steel-toed work shoes . We can't afford shoes..... I need black, closed-toe shoes with non-skid soles for my new waitress job....

For want of shoes, a job may be lost. For a want of a job, a personal economic turnaround may be lost. Barefoot, the journey to economic self sufficiency is like walking on thorns.

I just got a job interview! I hear you have someplace I can shower, shave and do my laundry. My wife says a haircut and new jeans wouldn't hurt either...

Dignity for our guests, as they navigate the day, often depends on survival essentials. A toilet, a bottle of water, a blanket, a hot meal. Hope often takes the shape of Andre House's opportunity to shower, launder clothes and select outfits in our clothing closet, make an essential phone call or get a hygiene kit. A barber college does a \$5 haircut.

Did you get my locker rent in the mail? (We did: one \$2 bill and eight quarters!)

They phone from jail cells, park benches and job sites to make sure we get the \$4 monthly locker rental fee. Those small, padlocked spaces and their backpacks are treasure chests that often hold all they possess.

My high school students are learning servant leadership....My wife died. I've got way too much time on my hands... I was homeless once, and now I can help....

This is the miracle of Andre House. More than 3,000 daytime and evening volunteers help the small core staff. We come— from all walks of life, all economic backgrounds, all mindsets, all religions (or none)— in solidarity with the poor. Six evenings a week, 30 volunteers tie on aprons and prepare nutritious meals, serve it to as many as 700 guests and clean up afterwards. Then volunteers and guests say their mutual farewells. The night air is rich with “thank yous” and “God bless yous” and “go in peace.” Guests walk into the dark with our prayers that they will have a good night, safe and secure until dawn's early light.

For a few hours, volunteers have forgotten the outside world, polarized by wars of word and deed. We have been blessed by the inclusive love and grace inside Andre House. With spirits grateful and renewed, we go home.

Come and see. To volunteer, please visit andrehouse.volunteerhub.com or call us at 602-255-0580



Emeka Iloeje



REFLECTIONS BY TWO OF OUR LONG TIME VOLUNTEERS

I have been coming now, for I think, close to twenty years. Never did I think when I first started that it would turn into such a passion. My fellow crew members have become a second family to me. We don't consider our hours at AH work. We have fun doing tasks that might seem tedious at times, but when shared with friends, become moments to share our lives. Just imagine the fun when you are up to your elbows in stuffing! And when it comes time to serve the meal to our guests, where else can one smile bring you dozens in return.

One of the other special things about AH is the core staff. I have been constantly amazed, year after year, at the dedication of the young people who come to serve for a year or two. They have been the most selfless, caring, and directed group of people I have known. What they have done with their lives once they leave AH is incredible. They will make the world a better place.

Thanks Andre House, for giving me a place to come and serve. I have enjoyed every moment.

Nancy Ciminello

Hi! This is Sherry.

I have been coming to Andre House for about 15 years. Started coming when my two youngest children were at St. Mary's high school. After they graduated, I continued to volunteer. Through the years I have met so many interesting friends, on staff and guests. I have been blessed to have the opportunity to serve others.



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Mike Smith

Leslie Korte



\$400

Provides **320** homeless and low-income individuals an evening meal.

\$800

Provides an evening meal to **640** homeless or low-income individuals.

For those who live in Arizona, **André House is a qualifying charity for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit.** The benefit of Arizona Charitable Tax Credit is that the charity gets the money and the donor gets a dollar for dollar reduction of Arizona State tax. Take \$400 in full tax credit if you file individually, or \$800 if you file jointly.

To donate visit us online at: www.andrehouse.org or mail a check to:

Andre House PO Box 2014 Phoenix, AZ 85001-2014