

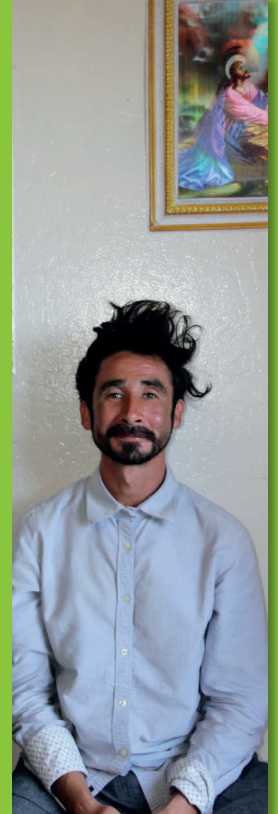


André House
of Arizona

THE OPEN DOOR

FROM THE CORE COMMUNITY OF ANDRE HOUSE

SUMMER EDITION 2017



HOME *Fr. Thomas Doyle, CSC*

Executive Director Andre House

When I was a boy, I had a very embarrassing condition that made a sleepover with friends impossible. My first attempt was one block away from my home. My friend's mother had to walk me home crying in the middle of the night. I forced my way through boy scout camping weekends and did my best to hide my malady until I was about 16 years old. I suffered acutelyfrom homesickness. (Is that what you were thinking?) ☺

Describing the ache that I felt being away from home escapes words. To feel separated physically from the place that I have known and loved is an awful condition. The worst burden for a person experiencing homelessness is generally not a lack of shelter. Far worse is the condition of being alone and separated from a secure source of love. We need love that is transmitted by families and friends, and the love that has its source in God.

I was recently asked to be a panelist for a local parish forum on homelessness. The question put to us was whether there was homelessness in Scottsdale, a northern suburb of Phoenix. It was a good forum and a very interesting question. For most of us, the face of homelessness looks like the disheveled person standing at the freeway entrance holding a sign, or the panhandler outside the grocery store. But I contend that being homeless doesn't mean that someone is homeless. The converse is also true – living in a house doesn't necessarily mean that we dwell in a home.



If there is a homeless crisis in America, it doesn't refer only to people without shelter. People in our own neighborhoods are experiencing alienation from family and friends. I've met people who live in shelters and on the street, who have a rich and robust source of home. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places" (14:2). While each of us longs to live in our Father's home for all eternity, Andre House attempts to provide the essential qualities of an earthly home with heavenly qualities to both our guests as well as our volunteers. It would be impossible to do it without you.

Congratulations Fr. Bill Wack, CSC

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples, "Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."(18:3). Those of you who knew Fr. Bill Wack, CSC as the Director of Andre House from 2002-2008, experienced a great leader who embodied that sentiment. Fr. Bill was young, but it was his sense of joy, wonder, laughter and playfulness that characterized his dedicated service at Andre House. He had an abiding trust that the Lord was in control in a setting that often seemed desperate or chaotic. We are so pleased that Pope Francis has asked Fr. Bill to serve the Church as a Bishop. His youthfulness, trust in Divine providence, wisdom and love for all people, especially those experiencing poverty, will be a great gift as he is made pastor of the diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee on August 22, 2017

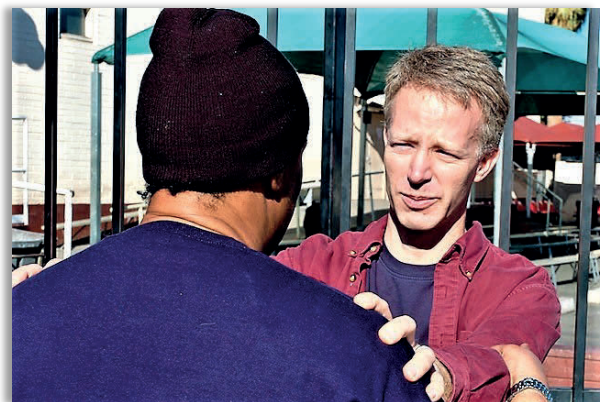


Photo courtesy of The Catholic Sun

BUTTERFLY *Cooper Nagaki*

Several times over the course of this year, I have been asked what I believe should be done to solve homelessness. Many of us have heard of “the butterfly effect.” It came originally from Edward Lorenz, a meteorologist at MIT, after he discovered that extremely minute causes could have large effects. A butterfly flaps its wings and causes a tornado on the other side of the world. If such an effect is seen in the weather, then I believe a similar principle remains true in social issues. In a society constantly shifting due to politics, economics, and culture, homelessness is a complex matter and I am no expert in the matter. But I do appreciate the question and the inquirers’ curiosity. One belief I hold is that the solving of any problem begins with the asking of questions.

So let’s ask some questions. Without the ability to predict the outcomes of our actions or even see the results of our past work, what can we do? I believe we must continue to work to meet people and their needs and continually search for new possibilities and answers to small problems. But most important is to carry out this work with love. One thing that has been on my mind recently is the idea of the “street family.” It is very common for people on the street to adopt one another as “mom,” “sister,” “son,” and “brother.” The fact that these familial ties occur even among the toughest people on the block is a sign to me of our persistent need for connection as humans, for a sharing of love. At Andre House, we work to meet this need in many subtle shapes and forms.

But many of our guests, and really people in general, are hard to love. Coincidentally, or perhaps not, those that are the hardest to love seem to be the most in need of it. This is difficult, so again, how can we act? How can I be better at loving others? K. Anders Ericsson is a Swedish psychologist famous for his research on expert performance. He published several studies to show what truly makes an expert is consistent, deliberate practice. Just as Michael Jordan can work his way to multiple NBA Championships, or Mozart to his masterful compositions, we can work our way to loving better. It requires our attention and consciousness. It requires us pausing to consciously love other people in the rush of our daily life.

Our hands are butterflies. We may not know the results of the beating of our wings: where, how, who; but I have faith that these small, conscious actions, no matter how miniscule, beget positive change. I

cannot relate to you the joy I have been given from joining a guest to her post-surgical check-up, from showering the elderly man who can’t stand on his own anymore, from remembering the name of the woman at the end of her first day experiencing homelessness. I am not sure how far these actions will go but I trust that these sort of actions work to create a brighter and more dignified world for all of us.

I am approaching the end of my time as a staff member at Andre House and endings can cause me to reflect on legacies, what I am leaving behind. A river can flow, at most any size, at most any pace, and it will inevitably and continuously carry part of the bank away with it. Give it enough time and the mark it makes will be great, like the Colorado flowing through the Grand Canyon. The river continues to move and can’t quite comprehend the effect it has had. But I am not the river. I am the canyon. I will leave Arizona forever changed by my experiences and I have Andre House to thank for that. I say Andre House, because it is simpler than naming quite literally thousands of guests, volunteers, and staff that have stepped through those doors and have carved me, have carried pieces of me away in your streams. Through your small acts of love, you have left in me a great chasm. I cannot express how much I love and appreciate you all for that.



Cooper Nagaki graduated from University of Arizona with a B.S. in Physiology. He has spent the last year as a member of our Andre House Core Team and is the leader of the Wednesday Night Weenie Dinner. Cooper will be pursuing his Graduate Degree in Medicine at the prestigious Creighton University School of Medicine.

It is therefore of supreme importance that we consent to live not for ourselves but for others. When we do this we will be able first of all to face and accept our own limitations. As long as we secretly adore ourselves, our own deficiencies will remain to torture us with an apparent defilement. But if we live for others, we will gradually discover that no expects us to be 'as gods'. We will see that we are human, like everyone else, that we all have weaknesses and deficiencies, and that these limitations of ours play a most important part in all our lives. It is because of them that we need others and others need us. We are not all weak in the same spots, and so we supplement and complete one another, each one making up in himself for the lack in another.

Thomas Merton, No Man Is an Island



Jessica Luebbering graduated from Gonzaga University with a B.A. in Sociology and Spanish and a Minor in Entrepreneurship & Innovation. She has been a member of the Andre House Core Team for two years. This year Jessica has been the fearless leader of the Thursday Night Bean Burrito crew. Jessica will be attending Marquette University to pursue her Graduate Degree in Public Service Non Profit Sector Administration.

Archipelago

Jessica Luebbering

The primary mission of Andre House is not one of solving the dilemma of homelessness, rather our primary mission is one of restoring dignity in the midst of what can be a very undignified situation. As an organization that restores dignity, we are blessed with the great privilege of getting to know our guests - often quite intimately. We are privy to the highlight reel of people's lives. I got approved for housing. I got kicked out of CASS. I got a job. All of my stuff was stolen. Sometimes it seems like we are the only agency that cares, like we are the ones fighting for our guests' dignity, a lonely island in a sea of injustices and apathy.

Recently, I was reminded that we are not alone. We received a list of our guests who qualify for housing that other agencies on the Human Services Campus are trying to locate. We might be like an island, surrounded on all sides by tumult and darkness, but Andre House and other agencies serving people experiencing homelessness and living in poverty are each their own island that forms a beautiful archipelago - a chain of islands - in the city of Phoenix. We are not alone, fighting the darkness and despair of poverty.

What our archipelago needs, however, are bridges to connect the different islands. There are a great number of resources in Phoenix, but getting our guests connected with the right one is challenging. And even beyond making the connection to different agencies, our guests need people to journey with them - people who will cross the bridges with them, people who will sit in waiting rooms with them, people who will celebrate successes with them, and determined people who won't let a setback or a mountain of red tape be the thing that keeps a person on the streets for one more night.

You could be that person. You could be the one who endures waiting rooms and red tape, the one who celebrates successes. I imagine our guests feel like they are islands unto themselves. You could be the one who reminds them that they are part of a beautiful island chain and that they are human. Please prayerfully consider serving as a mentor to one of our guests.

An Open Letter to the Guests of Andre House

My dear friends,

It has been my pleasure and honor to serve you for the past two years. Working here has been the best job I've ever had. Words can scarcely describe an experience that has slowly and minutely been woven into the fabric of my soul.

You are among the most amazing people I've ever met. You inspire me with your resilience and the patience and grace with which you endure a very difficult situation. If I were in your shoes, I'm not sure I would respond with the same poise that I see you exhibit.

You challenge me to be a better person and have pushed me to expand the boundaries of compassion. You have helped me to realize my personal mission to strive to be a light in an often dark world.

The prospect of seeing you gets me out of bed at five am every Saturday morning. I love that I am the first person to welcome you to Andre House on those mornings.

My favorite ministry, by far, has been passing out the tickets during dinner. Thank you for listening to my spiel every time, thank you for applauding, and thank you for commenting on my silly outfits. My goal has always been to put a smile on your faces and to remind you of your humanity.

A few months before discovering Andre House, I met with a woman who told me something very profound. She said, "If this is your people, and this is your island, then great!" She probably doesn't remember saying this or doesn't realize the impact this has had on my life, but I remember thinking, "this isn't my people and this isn't my island! I have to get off!"

The only problem was that I wasn't too sure just what my island was.

You, dear ones, are my people. Andre House is my island. I am leaving Andre House to explore other islands, but please know that you are still my people and I will carry my love for you and this island no matter where I go. I have been changed for the better because of you. Thank you. Please remember that you are loved.

Sincerely,
Jessica

LOVE HAS NO CEILING *Megan McCormick*

Would you believe me if I said it is very rare for a homeless person to enter the Andre House of Hospitality? After all, the Andre House exists for the express purpose of assisting individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness in the area of downtown Phoenix we call The Zone. Do people in The Zone need Andre House? Yes, of course. I wouldn't be working here if I didn't believe the Andre House serves an important function, and addresses the acute physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of our guests. And yet, I stand by the seemingly paradoxical statement that there is rarely a homeless person who enters the Andre House, because to say that someone is homeless is to misunderstand the definition of what it means to be without a home.



According to Merriam-Webster, a home is defined as "one's place of residence," a "familiar and usual setting." It is also defined as "the social unit formed by a family living together." In this regard, there is a distinct difference between having a home and being a homeowner. A home transcends the ceilings, walls, gates, and (closed) doors that come with owning a house or renting an apartment — physical barriers that, in some sense, limit a person's ability to develop emotionally and spiritually, to create a shared space of peace, familiarity, and open-ended dialogue with friends and loved ones. In one sense, our guests lack the physical spaces society says we need. In another sense, our guests challenge each day the notion that private home ownership is necessary for one's emotional and spiritual fulfillment.



When I arrived in Phoenix two years ago, I was given a room at the Core Staff House, but I was also promised a home. The adoption of my own "space" preceded the feeling of "home" that I would soon feel for my fellow core staff members, but, fortunately, I was blessed with both a house and a home in due time. I like being able to live in a house. It is very convenient. But, the experience of community at Andre House has brought me so much more joy than a physical dwelling could ever bring me.

In a similar way, there exists a community that forms in and around Andre House that I have been lucky to witness and even participate

in, sometimes. Every day, I am brought up to date with how certain guests are doing according to other guests. I am told to pray for so-and-so, who is having a hard time right now. I listen to guests refer to their loved ones as their street "mom," "dad," and "sister," even though they may not be biologically related. Often, they are not. I see how guests care for each other even when it's 100 degrees out, someone high on spice is dancing out in the middle of the street, others are agitated, someone is dealing, another is smoking something I can't quite see, and one guy is shouting at no one in particular that someone's stolen his bike. Is there anger, misery, squalor, and frustration in The Zone? Yes. Are there some guests who neglect the idea of "home" altogether? Yes, there are. And yet, the fact that so very many choose to make a loving space for themselves and their friends despite their present condition of material poverty is something to be noted and praised. No, there is no great big house with a white picket fence sitting in the middle of Jackson Street, but even a mansion in Beverly Hills could not contain the fire, life, and vitality that exists and is created in The Zone each day. And what a beautiful thing that the Andre House can provide, at least for a few hours, a place for those who lack the shelter, heat relief, and privacy common to the rest of us who live our lives, quite literally, beneath the ceiling.



Megan McCormick is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where she received her B.A. in Anthropology, minored in European Studies. This is her second year at Andre House and she is moving on to John Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies to pursue a Master of Arts in International Relations and International Economics.

Megan has just published her first young adult novel, "LEGACY". It is available on Amazon.com



DEATH, LIFE and COMMUNITY *Tyler McGehee*

It is both terrifying and comforting to know that *Andre House will always remain a home in Phoenix* for me. Terrifying, because its existence is a sign that human beings are still in need, are still struggling with poverty and food insecurity, and are still experiencing homelessness. Do I hope that, in ten years, Andre House still has a population it must serve?



Absolutely not. Unfortunately, it most likely will. But this reality is also slightly comforting, because the service and love that characterizes Andre House will continually bring together the community of Phoenix. It is an oddly beautiful event, six nights a week, to see such an incredibly diverse crowd inside such a small building. Young and old, rich and poor, we come together as a community for food and water. A testament to the power that basic human needs holds over us. Of course, there are people on two sides of the serving line: some are there to give food and water, others are there to receive it. But for that hour, we inhabit the same home and breathe the same air. Differences between people cannot be ignored, but they are briefly overshadowed by the reality that we are all human and are all deserving of the same kindness and love.

On May 9th, a man with the first name Keith died on the street across from Andre House. His body laid on the sidewalk with a comforter draped across his body but too small to cover his long arms and legs. On May 10th, Margaret Butterly, an Andre House employee, was provided an incredible funeral at St. Gregory's Church, where friends and family gathered to pay their respects and celebrate her wonderful life. Keith and Margaret are two people I never got to know. They are also two people who, frankly, lived very different lives, but I would be foolish to speak on behalf of people I do not know.

At Andre House, one received services and the other provided them. But both existed inside its walls, and could call Andre House their home.

This connection is radical, but it is what defines Andre House as a place of hospitality: to allow equality, compassion, and love to triumph over division and difference. May Keith and Margaret rest in peace, and hopefully we can continue to foster the community that brought both of them to Andre House.

Tyler McGehee has spent the last year as a member of our Andre House Core Team and leader of the Saturday Evening Great Goulash dinner. Tyler graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a B.S. Degree in Biochemistry with a supplemental Major in International Peace Studies. Tyler leaves us to do Clinical work in Chicago as he prepares for graduate studies to complete his degree in Medicine.



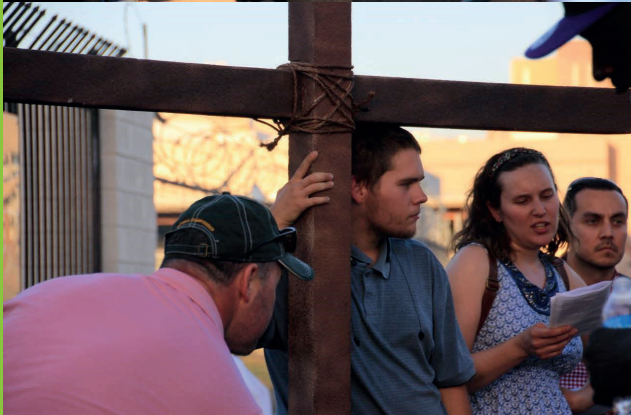
For our guest's achievements large and small Margaret would celebrate with a resounding

"WONDERFUL"

MARGARET BUTTERLY

1942 - 2017

Spring brings Andre House full circle. The remembrance of and dedication of lives we never knew through participation in the White Tanks Burial Ceremonies for the indigent, the "Washing of the Feet" of our homeless guests on Maundy Thursday, the walking of the Stations of the Cross in the downtown Phoenix Zone and the gathering of Spring Break volunteers helping to grow our Andre House community of service and love.





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Andre House of Hospitality



Making God Known, Loved and Served