



St. Francis / St. Joseph Catholic Worker

1437 Walnut Street, Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati, Ohio

Autumn 2004

OUR MISSION

St. Francis/St. Joseph House of hospitality strives to provide hospitality to homeless men. We recognize that God created each human being with great dignity and respect. The community of those of us who live and work at St. Francis/St. Joseph House of Hospitality desire to uphold this principle and to serve our guests accordingly. (Rev. 12/11/98)

MAILING ADDRESS

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TELEPHONE

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mark C. Schmieder,
Brennan Hill
Michael Harmon
Arlene Turner
Joyce Kiernan

HOUSE MANAGER

Karl Fields

HOW WE LIVE THE MISSION:

"To serve our Guests accordingly", brings with it the need for adjustments to each individual, adding empowerment tools in their lives. We connect community services with our guests whose greatest needs are employment, housing assistance, job readiness, health assistance. We operate with zero tolerance for drug use and violence, and the three-broken-rule policy. Each guest must maintain their goals and have a savings account within three weeks.

THANKS AND THANKSGIVING

A grateful heart doesn't just happen: A grateful heart has to be worked on and developed. When everything goes our way, it seems so natural, so harmonious, that we may just take the event(s) as natural and not really be thankful. When something goes against our grain, it is so natural to be aware of it and even to complain about it. Each day, I pray to be open to the spirit of God and to see the good around me and within me, and to be thankful.

Many prisoners I worked with were takers and had the attitude, that the "world owes me a living." In fact, a chaplain supervisor mentioned to me, when I was first in the prison ministry, not to expect prisoners to say thanks. I thought that was strange, because you won't change and grow if you are not thankful. So I began to expect a "Thank-You", and, you know what happened? I gradually received thank you's. Personally, I always gave thanks to a prisoner for any work they did. And what happened? Gradually, the atmosphere around the work area where I was began to change, to become more humane and less severe and harsh.

Every November that I worked in the prison, I worked with the prisoners in a special way to develop more thankful hearts. So this Thanksgiving, let us be thankful in a special way. All gifts ultimately come from God.

.....Mark Schmieder

ROGER BACON STAFFERS KEEP OUR SOUP KITCHEN ROLLING

Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, the St. Francis/St. Joseph House serves a soup kitchen with an average of 140 persons participating in a luncheon meal. In the Winter, participants come into the house for a

sandwich and a bowl of soup.

For over three years, now, each Tuesday, groups of the staff and teachers of Roger Bacon High take turns arriving at 7:00 AM at the School to fix sandwiches for our Soup Kitchen.

These dedicated volunteers say they are “happy to be part of the house, and coming together helps us to stay aware of the needs of the community and to appreciate the gifts we too often take for granted.”



Thanks to James _____, a former resident, for coming back and spending a whole day with Karl Fields installing hardware and hanging the heavy sliding basement door going to the outside.

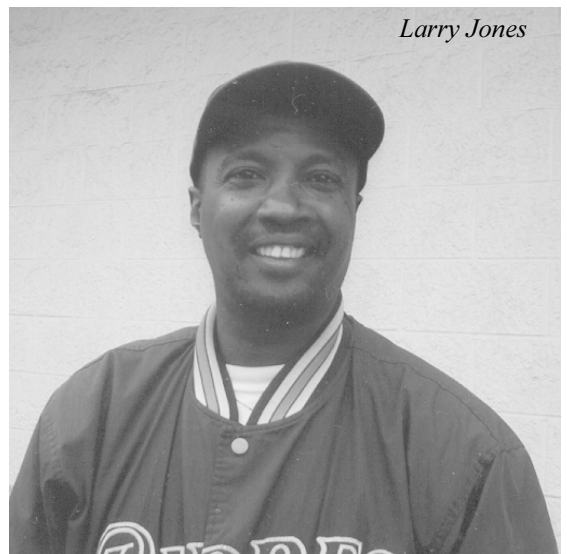
Larry has been clean for 11/2 years, after using drugs for over 15 years. “Working at the House helps me to stay clean and it is my away to give back; I also go to AA meetings at least 3 times a week.”

Larry Jones

STAFF

Mr. Larry Jones became drug clean April 24, 2003 while in treatment at the CCAT House, and then spent two and a half months at the St. Francis & St. Joseph CW House after being referred by a social worker at the CCAT House.

Larry successfully moved to independent living on August 1st, 3003. Since this past April, he has been working a shift here at the house as a part-time staff member.



Thanks to Young Neighbors In Action

A group of youth from Wisconsin spent a week in July helping to clean and paint the house. They were part of the Young Neighbors In Action program which has a chapter here in Cincinnati. They

Painted the living room and entrance hall, cleaned the windows, repaired and put new shelving in for food storage. Much work was accomplished and we are so grateful.



To put the world in order, we must first put the nation in order. To put the nation in order, we must put the family in order. To put the family in order, we must we must cultivate our personal life. And to cultivate our personal life, we must first set our hearts right.



SELFISHNESS

The other day at the house, a person knocked, and when I answered the door, I listened to him and then told him I would be with him in a few minutes, as I had to first finish a task that I had started.

The task was finished, and, five minutes later I returned to the porch to talk with the man who had knocked. He was gone.

An hour and a half later, a staff worker answered the door and there stood the man who had left previously. The man asked to store his belongings while he interviewed for an apartment; or, he said, he needed bus fare to get to his sisters', where he could also store his belongings while at his interview.

Without thinking twice, the staff person gave him \$2.00 for Bus fare.

Later I asked the staff person why he had helped this man when he himself needed money so badly. The staff person answered: "You know why I did it? True, I needed the money. But the reason I did it was because I am essentially selfish, and I want to overcome my selfishness."

.....*Mark Schmieder*

"Just as there are no little people or unimportant lives, there is no insignificant work"

.....*Elena Bonner*

Thanks to St. Clement School

Every fourth Tuesday of the month, five junior high youths and two adults volunteer to serve soup and sandwiches and have expressed their thanks for our helping them to learn while serving others. Some student comments are:

A) I had made a judgment that all homeless would look like "bums", but learned that most dressed fine and had good clothing.

B) I was surprised that a child came to the Soup Kitchen. I thought they would be in school.

C) I thought people wouldn't talk to me. I found that most say "Thank you," and even, "God Bless You." People are grateful. They take the simple food without complaining.

D) I learned it was important to serve them not just with food, but with politeness too.

E) I found that I needed not to judge. Some were just temporarily out of work. Some just did not make enough money. They watch what they eat too.

THOUGHTS ON PEACE

ELECTIONS AND THE FUTURE

When this issue reaches you, the elections will be over and we must go on. We are in a very difficult situation with Iraq, and we must pray for the gift of wisdom for our leaders to choose the right path in what are very difficult circumstances.

We must make efforts to learn about and understand the culture of other peoples or else we build walls. One thing about the Islamic religion, is that some of the Muslim extremists or “Islamists” believe that the worst a Muslim can do is to commit apostasy, namely, to deny their religion by siding with the non-Muslim enemy.

Thus, Iraqis, who are now cooperating with the U.S.A., can and are being viewed as apostates and are to be isolated. Also, the fact is, that the USA has generated more feelings of hatred in many, many Muslims where there was none before. An Iraqi Muslim stated, “I am 68 years old and have never had real hatred in me. And now, I have such an intense hatred towards Americans.” (See the Sunday “Cincinnati Enquirer, Oct. 24, 2004).

Oscar Romero says to us: “We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work. We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way and opportunity for God’s grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and workers. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own. Amen”

If one wants peace, one must begin the journey within; one must envision peace within, envision peace without. One must choose peace, pray for peace. And if we pray long enough, if we pray hard enough, we will cease to pray and become the prayer. We then may become instruments of peace.

.....*Mark Schmieder*

“Living overseas, I have seen clearly how the image of the US abroad has fallen - people’s opinion of the US has suffered because it appears that Americans are indifferent to the needs and opinions of the rest of the world. Sadly, the result has been that people have become cynical about the value of democracy — they feel that if the country which so strongly espouses democracy commits such abuses, then democracy must not have real value.”

Pat “Tree” Mosolf, former house manager.

John XXIII (*Pacem in Terris*):

“There in this age of ours, which prides itself in its atomic power, it is irrational to think that war is the proper way to obtain justice for violated rights.”

John Paul II, 2002:

“War never again . War destroys the lives of innocent people, teaches how to kill, throws into upheaval even the lives of those who do the killing and leaves behind a trail of resentment and hatred, plus making it all the more difficult to find a just solution to the very problems that provoked the war.

US Catholic Bishops, 2002:

“We are concerned that war against Iraq could have unpredictable consequences not only for Iraq but for peace and stability in the middle east.

GUEST REMARKS

I, **Ronald _____** was incarcerated in a State Prison, where I had plenty of time to make a decision to change my life. But as my release date was approaching, I got very nervous, not knowing where I was going to live. So with the help of my father who is in recovery, I was accepted into the Catholic Worker House, where in the first week I was blessed with a job, at which I am still working.

Upon my arrival at the Catholic Worker House, I was very scared because there were rules and regulations which were hard for me because now I was "free". But through my will and determination, I made it. I attended AA meetings regularly, which became my support family and my new found family at the Catholic Worker House.

I now have an apartment and a steady job. Upon leaving the CW House, I had plenty of fears. My apartment was located in the very neighborhood where I frequently drank and did drugs. I made the decision to turn it over to my Higher Power, which still guides me through my trials and tribulations. There will always be temptations, but there are also choices. I choose to remain clean and sober, with the help of new-found family, each day, one day at a time.

I give thanks for the St. Francis/St. Joseph Catholic Worker House. □

I Remember June 14, 2004

After an embarrassing moment at the Hamilton County Eviction Court, I had to quickly gather my thoughts for housing. I was too embarrassed to tell family members my inevitable fate, and my friends in recovery stood by their "tough love" rule. My relapse to drugs, two years in prison and subsequent using drugs had once again led me to homelessness.

I remember knocking at the Catholic Worker House door. I did not know what to expect. It is not located in the best area and I remember not even associating myself with that area during my active using.

Karl Fields, the house manager, invited me in. I was startled by the life size statue of St. Francis in the hallway, but pleased with the

homelike appeal of the living room and dining room. I knew I was in a safe place.

I waited in the living room with three other gentlemen, who were in the same boat. Large black garbage bags, book bags, and stories of near despair filled the living room. Sitting with my "Sunday Best" outfit, I wanted to dissociate myself from this experience, but secretly hoped to get a bed. I prayed. I did not want to end up at another homeless shelter.

I met with the House Manager, and began the intake paper work. I got through most of the paperwork and was informed I did not have a referral. I became fearful. I was reassured after Karl made a phone call to the free store and got a referral. "Oh Happy Day!" I was able to move in that afternoon.

I signed the rules, ate a few meals, and got some much needed rest. The rules did not make much sense. I protested. The meals were bland except for Wednesday nights, and the twin size mattress no longer seemed to fit. I no longer wanted to interact with the staff or other residents. But I needed the staff and residents to maintain my abstinence and to eventually obtain permanent housing. But through it all I was determined to stay the course for 60 days. The staff at the Catholic Worker House were both fair and consistent.

As the days passed, a light began to come on within me. I became grateful. I volunteered around the House. I took more ownership for my personal recovery and became involved in a local Church. I made my commitment and moved to my own apartment. I am grateful to have had this opportunity. I still see a few residents and we boast in our new way of life.Greg

An old Sioux man was trying to describe to his grandson what it felt like to be an elder.

"It takes strength," he said. "I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is vengeful, angry, and violent. The other wolf is loving and compassionate."

"Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?", asked his grandson.

"The one I feed," he replied.

FINANCIAL APPEAL

Our budget is extremely tight this year and we are asking for your extra consideration. We are so grateful to our generous friends of the house.

Perhaps you could consider one of the following adoptions:

- Newspaper\$17.50 / month
- Resident's phone (for job messages, etc.).....\$29.00/ month
- Water Bill\$160.00/ month
- Groceries (beyond the Free Store and donated items)\$260.00/ month

We are thankful for any help you can give and have given.
(The St. Francis/St. Joseph Catholic Worker House is a 501-(C)-3 Tax exempt organization)

Cut Here and Return (Please make sure your address shows on reverse side)

Please send us your e-mail address. (In spite of our financial worries, we promise not to sell it to the highest bidder.) Your e-mail will enable us to send you the newsletter and to keep you abreast of any immediate issues.

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

STATISTICS

In the last issue, we printed some statistics for the year 2003. We served 251 men in our homeless shelter for 2003, and 152 were unsuccessful. Fifty-seven men were hospitality stays and 42 men significantly improved their lives and went on to definite independent living with a job and an apartment. The 57 men who had hospitality stays moved on to an apartment or another place after a stay of 3 days or less. The later we do not count as either successful or

unsuccessful.

Of the 42 men who were significantly successful, out of the 194 total who had significant stays, there was a 21.6% success rate. The national average is about 6%. We have a great staff. But a more in depth follow-up is lacking, as we do not have the money nor the resources to pursue it. The past month we contracted to be in HMIS, the Homeless Management Information System and will be in a position to track and serve the homeless more effectively.



2004 CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION



Please Join Us.



**Saturday, December 20, at 6:30 PM
Dinner at 7:00 PM
Music, Song and Party Follows**



If you want to participate in the gift exchange,
please bring a gift in the \$8 - \$10 range, to put in the grab bag.

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cincinnati,
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Permit No.
4039



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