

COMPASSION FATIGUE

Homelessness is a lagging indicator. This means that even as the economy picks up, we see an increase in homelessness. This is because when people lose a job or experience a foreclosure it can take a while for them to burn through savings, sell off possessions, and stay with friends or relatives as long as possible until they find themselves standing on the street wondering where to go.

A community can grow weary of seeing down-and-out people. But we can no more wish economic injustice away than we can wish a cancer away. Compassion fatigue is a serious problem if it hardens attitudes in the community about people who are homeless.

When I am feeling overwhelmed by the hardship I see I like to remember

the many people who have contacted me over years. These are members of the community who were helped once by St. Stephen's and who are now living productive, satisfying lives as our neighbors.

People do use the help they get to move on with their lives. Where we apply our energy and resources we make positive change happen. The story below about Fred, a former panhandler, is an example of this.

The center-spread of this newsletter gives a number of ways for readers to get plugged into the rewarding work of ending homelessness. There is work to be done at home or in your workplace; there is work to be done up-close and personal with people who are suffering; and we like to say here that "learning is service"—come

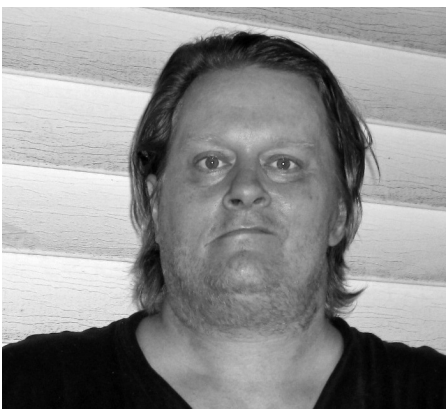


Mikkel Beckmen, Executive Director

to one of our free Institutes and learn directly from people who are homeless.

The cure for compassion fatigue is to engage. Make a difference. Change a life and maybe, though you didn't intend to, change your own.

How My Life Was Changed



Fred

I was just spinning wheels after retiring from wrestling with WWE in 2003 due to injury. The continued pay I received went to drugs instead of stabilizing my life. I worked as a security guard, but due to my addiction there was nothing to show for my paychecks. I moved with my son, Jacob, into a shelter and stopped using drugs. A nonprofit helped us get an apartment, but after paying the

rent I hardly had any money leftover to keep my son fed.

I started panhandling downtown. This experience emotionally destroyed me – how can you have any self-respect in this situation? Jacob, who was about 11 at the time, came with me. I knew he shouldn't be there, but he biked nearby, all the while making sure we could see each other.

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St. Stephen's Human Services

Housing

Housing opportunities for individual adults and families, including Kateri Residence for Native American women, our Rapid Exit partnership helping families and singles move quickly out of shelters, supportive housing in our Long-Term Homeless and Family Supportive Housing programs, and Homeless Prevention for people in danger of losing their housing.

Employment

Employment support for single adults staying in south Minneapolis shelters as well as families leaving the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

Community Engagement & Street Outreach

Educational and advocacy opportunities for housed and not-yet-housed people to promote a greater understanding of homelessness, including through our zAmya Theater Project, A Day in the Life Program, and Homeless Against Homelessness.

Shelter & Emergency Services

Shelter and advocacy for adult men in our Shelter. For people living without shelter, and the community members concerned for them, we provide on-the-spot outreach and resources, including The Handbook of the Streets, help obtaining birth certificates, and representative payee service.

For questions about this newsletter or St. Stephen's Human Services, please contact:

Margaret Miles
Director of Development
612-870-2276
mmiles@ststephensmpls.org

St. Stephen's never sells or shares the contact information of its supporters.



I Am a St. Stephen's Educator

I've been homeless off and on for years. When I lived in Duluth about 5-6 years ago I helped start the Twin Parks Action Coalition.

I've lobbied at the capitol with the Joint Religious Legislative Committee and the Minnesota Coalition. I started with St. Stephen's as an educator during the A Day in the Life workshops and as a member of Homeless Against Homelessness.

A lot of different things led to my homelessness. I have PTSD and major depressive disorder. I used to drink a lot. I have had a home now for nine months, and I don't want to mess that up so I'm careful.

I stay involved in policy issues because sometimes people who are homeless get overlooked. Unless you've experienced it you don't really know how important services and affordable housing are. Staying



Gretchen, an Educator for St. Stephen's

tribal IDs they wouldn't take military IDs and these are people who fought for this country!

It's interesting talking to the groups who come through St. Stephen's educational program. We get older folks from churches, young kids, groups of all sizes. Sometimes I'll tell young people that I come from

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involved makes me feel better about my situation because I'm doing something positive.

I'm testifying with the ACLU about the Voter ID amendment because if it passes they will not accept Tribal IDs. It's what I prefer to use and it's a federally accepted ID. When people come off the Reservation that's the main form of ID they have. In addition to not taking

the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation near Hayward, Wisconsin and they'll say, "Oh! My parents have a home up there." Some of them are wide-eyed hearing about homelessness, but they're all kind. They want to learn and I think that's great.

Thank You for Caring

From: A Concerned Citizen
Sent: Tuesday, 2:05 PM
To: St. Stephen's Street Outreach Team
Subject: Homeless outreach

Hi,
I had a question about your outreach program. There is a homeless man that sits at the off ramp of 394 and _____ that inspired me to look for a non-profit for the homeless. This man is older, very dirty, overgrown beard with what looks like one eye. I felt really bad for him today so I walked back down from my office with a coffee and \$5 for him, but I'd really like to find him some additional help if he's interested. If your program reaches to the suburbs, I'd really appreciate someone reaching out to him. He didn't look well. Shaking and hunched over.

Thanks

From: St. Stephen's Street Outreach
To: A Concerned Citizen
Sent: Tue 2:52 PM
Subject: RE: Homeless outreach

Thank you for contacting us. We'll check on him shortly.

From: A Concerned Citizen
Sent: Tuesday, 2:55 PM
To: St. Stephen's Street Outreach Team
Subject: RE: Homeless outreach

Thank you. He is usually there in the mornings. If you don't find him I could always contact someone when I see him there, which is fairly frequently.

From: St. Stephen's Street Outreach
To: A Concerned Citizen
Sent: Tue 3:14 PM
Subject: RE: Homeless outreach

I wanted to give you an update. The gentleman is known to the Outreach staff. Unfortunately, he has complex circumstances so you may continue to see him as we work with him. Folks outside are grateful to meet us and are sometimes immediately open to our housing options; with others we may need to build trust over time. I can assure you that he is accessing shelter and meals at night and we're staying in touch with him. Please contact us again if you have more concerns.

From: A Concerned Citizen
Sent: Tuesday, 4:04 PM
To: St. Stephen's Street Outreach Team
Subject: RE: Homeless outreach

Thank you for the update. I thought that may be the case when I saw his condition up close. I'll probably still bring him a cup of coffee because he seemed appreciative of that...maybe that will help your organization to bridge the gap to additional help. I've also just made a donation so I hope that will help. Thank you so much for the work that you do!

OCCUPY ST. STEPHEN'S!



Volunteers in the early 1980s

The story of the start of St. Stephen's Human Services is inspiring: a crisis was happening in the community and an army of volunteers gathered to help. Some volunteers fed and sheltered people; others contacted the media and elected officials to call attention to homelessness. One wrote a play; another went to New York to seek advice from Dorothy Day.

Decades later St. Stephen's is an established social service nonprofit employing many people. Its mission continues to be propelled by a dynamic legion of volunteers and engaged community members.

This portion of our newsletter is a call to readers to connect with homelessness. It will take all of us to end homelessness. What role will you play?

WAYS TO OCCUPY ST. STEPHEN'S

St. Stephen's Institute on Ending Homelessness

Learning Is Service!

Each Institute event consists of a presentation on a major topic, discussion, plus an optional 30-minute on-site volunteer

opportunity. All Institutes take place at St. Stephen's new location at 2309 Nicollet Avenue Minneapolis 55404. *Please see page 8 of this newsletter for upcoming institutes!*

A Day in the Life

This full- or half-day experiential-learning program gives a real-life glimpse into the daily lives of people experiencing homelessness. Groups visit and share meals and conversation with people who have experienced homelessness. *Please contact Cathy at 612-760-5125 or cheying@ststephensmpls.org.*

Speakers for Your Event

St. Stephen's offers speakers or panels of speakers to address classes, meetings, or other groups. Speakers may include people who have experienced homelessness. We will work with you if there is a particular topic you would like addressed such as why people become homeless, panhandling, or what is working to end homelessness. *Please contact Monica at 612-481-9501 or mnilsson@ststephensmpls.org.*

zAmya Theater Project

Be entertained and informed by our zAmya Theater Project. zAmya brings together both homeless and housed individuals to create and perform a theater production about homelessness. Rent a tailored-to-your-needs performance or workshop for your group! A public performance is being presented at St. Stephen's on Thursday Sept. 13. See page 8 for details. *For performance questions please contact Maren at (612) 760-4804 or mward@ststephensmpls.org*

ststephensmpls.org.

Homeless Against Homelessness

For people who have experienced homelessness and their allies, this group works on legislative policy and other community issues that affect people in poverty. *Please contact Robert at 612-760-4668 or rfischer@ststephensmpls.org.*

Volunteer On-Site

Join your talents with our efforts to end homelessness! We have a variety of volunteer opportunities such as Overnight Shelter Volunteer, Meal Groups, and Career Center Assistant. *Please visit our website at www.ststephensmpls.org/joinus or call Michelle at 612-879-7627.*



Freddy, who has experienced homelessness, speaks with A Day in the Life participants)

Volunteer at Your Place

Opportunities to manage donation drives, assemble "Welcome Home" kits, and more are available if you prefer to volunteer at your home or workplace. *Please visit our website at www.ststephensmpls.org/joinus or call Michelle at 612-879-7627.*

VOLUNTEERING TO SHARE THE STORY

Paul Foster began volunteering after hearing Executive Director Mikkell Beckmen speak about the mission of St. Stephen's.

"I was impressed and wanted to get involved," Paul says, "but my impression of volunteering with homelessness was that you could donate clothes or food or come on Thanksgiving." Paul visited St. Stephen's website and was pleased to see the variety of volunteer opportunities. Being a writer himself, transcribing interviews from the Oral History of Homelessness project seemed perfect. St. Stephen's staff and volunteers have collected hundreds of oral



Paul Foster

histories from people who have experienced homelessness in Minnesota. Interviews are recorded and volunteers like Paul transcribe them. It isn't easy work and most volunteers complete a half-dozen

transcriptions and move on to a different volunteer opportunity. Paul, however, has transcribed dozens of stories.

Paul appreciates the insights he's gained from this project. Not only does he have a better grasp on logistical difficulties that people without stable housing face, but he has also become aware of the day-to-day experiences of the folks he

transcribes. "You get to know at least one aspect of their life really intimately and whatever misfortune led them to that situation...it's very emotional."

He has also noticed changes in his behavior. He and his wife have one air conditioning unit in their apartment, and occasionally he finds himself complaining. Then he remembers a recent transcription and thinks, "I'm complaining about this, and they're in a tent outside. It puts things in perspective."

To volunteer, please contact Michelle at 612-879-7627 or mperrin@ststephensmpls.org.

To see the fruits of Paul's work visit the Oral History project at www.OralHistoryofHomelessness.org.

ZAMYA THEATER

A witty joke. A colorful song. An actor experiencing homelessness.

St. Stephen's zAmya Theater Project is a unique offering. The actors entertain while also teaching people about the serious experiences that people without housing face.

zAmya Theater Project brings together people who have experienced homelessness and those who have not to create theatrical performances. It provides a source of income for actors while helping share stories about homelessness with the greater community. zAmya is the Sanskrit word for "justice".

Michael Griffin, Director of Faith Formation at Pax Christi Catholic



zAmya spoofs game shows

Church, said his church decided to host a performance because, "We saw it as something very different from the usual educational tools." Michael says the audience was "captivated by the experience," because it was so accessible for all attendees.

After performing, zAmya actors lead the audience in a conversation about homelessness and how to help end it. Heidi Johnson McAllister, Director of the Downtown Congregations to End

Homelessness (DCEH) also hosted a performance. She said zAmya is a great conversation starter that "helps people think outside their own perspective."

zAmya offers many options for community organizations, such as short skits or group conversations about a specific topic. A public performance of *There's No Place Like Home* is being presented at St. Stephen's in September and October. See page 8 for details & join us!

Interested in hosting a zAmya performance? Please contact Maren at (612) 760-4804 or mward@ststephensmpls.org.

Interested in volunteering with zAmya? Contact Michelle at 612-879-7627 or mperrin@ststephensmpls.org.

RECENT DOINGS AT ST. STEPHEN'S...



Participants in our Ending Long-term Homelessness program volunteered to spend the day bagging food at Feed My Starving Children.



Volunteer Andres Morantes interviewed a gentleman for St. Stephen's quarterly count of people who are living unsheltered in Minneapolis.



Mike Menner cooked up the pasta for this year's Italian Dinner fundraiser where program participants and staff serve guests.



80% of St. Stephen's programs moved into a new location at 2309 Nicollet, just four blocks from our former site.



Prior to our move, former staff, volunteers, and parish members visited during an Open House at the 31-year location of our programs at the St. Stephen's Church location.



Staff from Ebenezer Senior Living donated 100 pairs of socks to our Shelter.

I met St. Stephen's Street Outreach while I was panhandling. I showed them where Jacob and I lived. They would ask if I had money for laundry and I would point to the kitchen sink and say "There's my Maytag." Long story short, St. Stephen's helped me get an apartment I could afford. The care and concern that staff at St. Stephen's has shown makes me feel secure, like a good inhaler when you have asthma.

My son has paid repeatedly for my

downfalls. We now play the "I Love You Game." While watching TV, he'll say, "I love you, Dad." I respond, "I love you, Jacob," and this continues over and over. It's a good way to work through my guilt.

I have some goals for the future. I want to concentrate on my son's education. And although I can't repay St. Stephen's for financial support, I can repay them for their respect by maintaining the living situation I have now.

WISH LIST

DONATIONS

Accepted Tues & Thurs 8:30-11:30 and Wed 11:30-1:30

Please drop off at our new location:

2309 Nicollet Avenue Minneapolis 55404.

Small loads can be brought to the front door.

If you have more than one bag/box, please bring to rear of building and ring intercom.

For more information call Andria at 612-870-2292.

We are in need of:

- Bedding (sheets, blankets, etc)
- Towels
- Kitchenware (silverware, pots, pans, dishes)
- Men's socks & t-shirts
- Household cleaning supplies
- Winter gloves
- Winter hats
- Sleeping bags
- Long underwear (adult, both genders)

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Your Gift Matched or Double-Matched!



The good people at the Frey Foundation have once again offered a challenge to supporters to help St. Stephen's meet its annual fundraising goal.

If you are a new donor, a donor who has not given in 2+ years, or a donor who increases your gift by 20% over your most recent gift, your gift will be MATCHED IN FULL.

If you are a prior donor who DOUBLES the amount of your most recent gift, that gift will receive a DOUBLE MATCH! Just think, if you gave \$25 last year and are able to give \$50 this year, you will earn St. Stephen's an additional \$100 from the Frey Foundation.

It seems like we are all being asked to do more these days, but we hope you will consider this unique opportunity to make a major impact with your gift this year.

Thank you for your consideration!

ending homelessness

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St. Stephen's Institute on Ending Homelessness

Learning Is Service!

Each Institute event consists of a presentation on a major topic, discussion, and an optional on-site volunteer opportunity. Topics are geared to ages 14 and older. All Institutes take place at St. Stephen's new location at 2309 Nicollet Avenue Minneapolis 55404. *These events are free.*

To RSVP please contact Andria at ABrandt@ststephensmpls.org or 612-870-2292.

A Brief History of Homelessness & Current Trends

Monday September 17, 5:30

Panhandling—To Give or Not to Give?

Monday October 15, 5:30

Children and Homelessness

Monday November 12, 5:30

See future newsletters or our website for more upcoming Institute topics www.ststephensmpls.org

Upcoming Events

ZAMYA THEATER PROJECT: Public Performances!

There's No Place Like Home

Thursday September 13 | Thursday October 11 | Thursday November 15
7:00 p.m. \$10 at door
2309 Nicollet Avenue Minneapolis 55404
Seating is limited! Please RSVP to mward@ststephensmpls.org

