

ST. ANN PLACE
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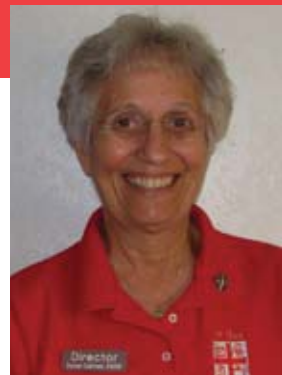


Friends of **St. Ann Place**

Volume IV, Issue 1 A newsletter for St. Ann Place Winter 2009

*The mission of
St. Ann Place
is to witness
Gospel values by
providing a
comfortable,
clean, safe place
where clients
receive services
in a dignified
and respectful
manner
regardless of
race, religion
or sex.*

From the Desk of the Director:



Dear Friends,

I am writing this letter on one of the coldest days of this winter season. While that departure from our mild sunny January days may have caused some inconvenience or discomfort for most of us, it has been extremely hard on our clients who are outdoors all day and all night. So we are very grateful to the many people who sent us warm hats and gloves, jackets and sweaters as well as blankets. Those items have brought some measure of comfort to the women and men who turn to us for help.

Many of our donors, who undoubtedly felt the effects of the downturn in the economy, did not forget that there were many who were less fortunate than they. That seemed evident in the past quarter when donations have been higher than in previous months. So again, I want you to know that your support of this ministry to some of the areas most vulnerable citizens is deeply appreciated.

By the time you receive our next Newsletter we will have pictures to show you of the new look at the Center. Sr. Katie's Health Care office has been relocated; next will be the painting and carpeting of the offices. The white walls of the waiting room area will give way to color. For the most part we have not had to interrupt services, which has been a blessing. Gratefully our volunteers are adept at working in crowded spaces.

We look forward to another year of serving our homeless brothers and sisters and again thank you for the many ways that you make that possible.

S. Carleen Cekal, SSND

Sister Carleen Cekal, SSND
Director

Come & Gone

Christmas time brought some special moments of joy to all of us at the Center.

Thanks to the creativity of Diane Garten, Ann Cantone and Susan Morgan as well as the helping hands of others the place took on a festive look by mid-December. This year they put a Christmas tree in the corner of the waiting room. That gave some of the clients the fun of decorating it – something they don't get a chance to do anymore. Watching them reminded a lot of us about how easily we take things for granted.

On December 17 Sr. Carleen and her staff honored the volunteers at a Christmas party in the banquet room at the Church gymnasium. Those who came had time to meet other volunteers who serve on a day different from theirs while enjoying hors d'oeuvres. After the dinner there was time to join in singing some holiday songs led by Anna Torres and Joseph Colletti.

The final preparations for the sixth Christmas dinner for 100 of the Center's homeless clients were completed on December 19 when a group of sandwich makers turned their skills into gift-wrapping. By the end of the morning 200 packages were ready to be put under the tree in the banquet room. Christmas day dawned bright and sunny. Some of the clients went to St. Ann Place first to get a shower and put on their new clothes (also a gift from the donor who gives this party). We are grateful to the volunteers who gave up Christmas morning to help out. It was in the words of many guests as they left the party: "A day to be remembered".



New Outdoor Seating

Crowding is one of the problems that is faced daily at the Center and can lead to short tempers, especially if there is no place to sit down to drink your morning coffee or eat your lunch. To alleviate that problem four tables with benches were installed on the edge of the parking lot. On a hot Saturday in November two of the clients and an employee of Burkhardt Construction (who volunteered his time) mixed cement, dug the foundation spaces and set up the tables. The tables are a popular place so you will rarely find an empty place there.



Some “ Clerical” Help

This is not about some stenographers or mailroom clerks that we have hired, (we do those jobs ourselves), but about several of our newest volunteers who are clerics! Fr. Seamus is back at the Center again, this time coming in on Thursday morning to help give out bag lunches and make sandwiches. On Friday morning Fr. John comes to the Center to help clients apply for or renew their food stamp application. Three seminarians Dan, Dennis and Toan (young men studying for the priesthood) give volunteer service here once a week learning up close and personal about the struggles of those who are less fortunate. We are grateful to them for helping us make life a little easier for our clients.



Emergency “Housing”

As a part of our expanded Health Care Program we have made arrangements with a nearby motel for our clients. That way they have a bed to sleep in and a bathroom for the night before they go to the hospital and after they are discharged. Depending on the procedure the client is having we pay the rent for several nights or a week. The recent case of one of these clients caught the attention of Channel 5. He had suffered a stroke and as soon as he was able to stand alone he was discharged from the hospital.

Sr. Katie appeared with the client on the eleven o'clock news discussing some of the circumstances of the case. This client “camps out” next to an abandoned building nearby where he sleeps on the ground. On the cold afternoon when he was released from the hospital, he was wearing the thin tee shirt he had on when he was taken there. So the first place he went was to St. Ann Place looking for a warm sweater.

The possibility for physical therapy to restore his speech and mobility is handicapped by a lack of shelter and transportation. Our temporary solution of a room in a hotel for two weeks just doesn't solve the problem. Sr. Katie has experienced several other heartbreaking situations like this one in the past month. While we will continue to do everything we can the circumstances of the women and men who are homeless is stretching our limited resources and cry out for better solutions.

A Special Prayer

When the volunteers and staff gathered for prayer before opening up for clients Sr. Carleen offered a prayer written by Mother Theresa of Calcutta. That prayer exemplified what everyone around the table knew they were trying to do for the people who were coming in that day. Denise Varney was so struck by how the prayer reflected her own desires she had it beautifully framed. It now hangs in the kitchen as a reminder to others of why they are here. The prayer is printed on the back page of this Newsletter.



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Charity Begins Today

Today somebody is
suffering

Today somebody is in
the street

Today somebody is
hungry.

Our work is for today.

Yesterday has gone

Tomorrow has not
yet come — today,

We have only today
to make Jesus known,
loved, served, fed,
clothed, sheltered.

Today — do not wait
for tomorrow.

Tomorrow might
not come.

*Tomorrow we will not
have them if we do not
Feed them Today.*

Bl. Theresa of Calcutta

Gifting others

Recently we have been receiving donations to support the services at St. Ann Place from people who want to honor a friend on his/her birthday or anniversary. At Christmas time we received several donations that donors had sent instead of buying a gift for a family member. As the donor insert in this Newsletter shows we have also received two major gifts from the friends and relatives of a deceased person. We are grateful to the Martin & Nordone families for suggesting that donations to St. Ann Place be sent in lieu of flowers when they submitted the obituary notice to the newspaper.

We will be developing special cards to acknowledge these donations. We hope that others will think about a similar donation as a gift or remembrance. It's a great way to "gift" them and help others in the process at the same time.

Client Services/ programs:

- Counseling and referral
- Showers & bathrooms
- Laundry service
- Health Care advocacy
- Morning coffee & donuts
- Bag lunch
- Telephone for local calls
- Place to receive mail
- Use of a computer

