



April 2019

DAYLIGHT

happenings at St. John Center for Homeless Men



Volunteers: THE HEART OF OUR MISSION

On any given day 18 volunteers put their personal lives on hold and make their way to St. John Center to provide services and support for the men here. Last year, SJC volunteers gave in excess of 11,600 hours to make the days a little brighter for nearly 1,700 homeless men.

Every day since our doors opened in 1986, volunteers have been here. They plan their lives around their volunteer shifts. And many have done it for decades. Pick a day and you will find smiling volunteers welcoming clients when they check in, assisting them with telephone calls, making and serving hundreds of cups of coffee, and signing men up to take a warm shower.

In addition to these four traditional volunteer jobs, many of our loyal friends find other ways to help. They work on our fundraisers, wrap Christmas gifts, address envelopes, build, install, clean, and run errands. In March, volunteers expanded their work to help with the daily operations of the new transitional storage program.

St. John Center relies on the support of 175 dedicated volunteers. Their contribution to the daily operation of the shelter cannot be overstated. It would cost the shelter more than \$280,000 annually to pay for the services provided by our volunteers. Simply put, volunteers are at the heart of our daily work at St. John Center.

Volunteer Training

Training sessions for new volunteers are held at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month at St. John Center. If you would like to become a St. John Center volunteer, please contact Raymond Schafer at 502-398-3488 or rschafer@stjohncenter.org.

M.A. Allgeier



M.A. volunteers twice weekly at St. John Center's new Transitional Storage facility on Liberty Street.

"Following the increasingly dire situation with the homeless population in Louisville in the news, I read about the storage project and it just struck a chord with me. It's such a practical solution to at least one of the multiple barriers this population faces. So I'm very happy to be able to focus my volunteering on this project," she said.

Jack & Jackie Lydon



Jack started volunteering at St. John Center in September 1992. After 27 years he can still be found at SJC twice weekly.

"I thought I should be doing something to help ... and St. John was a good place to start. Once there I've never had a reason to leave as the mission has grown and the need still exists," said Jack.

A 10 - year volunteer, Jackie works on Raisin' the Rent and spends untold hours addressing envelopes for thank you letters. "I do whatever I can to make a lighter load for the staff."

Nathaniel & Maria



Nathaniel and his wife Maria have been volunteering together at St. John Center since December 2017.

A former St. John Center client, Nathaniel says "I get to be an example and sometimes help mentor men that are in the same situation that I was. I show them there is hope."

"It makes my heart feel very happy to help a little bit," said Maria. "I have learned a lot. Before, I was scared of the homeless. Now, I see Jesus in every face."

William Harris



For 2 ½ years, William Harris has been volunteering in the Coffee Room and Shower Room He also sweeps, cleans, busses tables, and helps move clients into apartments.

"I like to volunteer at St. John Center because it is the right thing to do and I want to give back. These are great people to work with and they believe in me," he said.



Weaving the social fabric: volunteers at St. John Center

David Brooks wrote in his Feb 18 *New York Times* column, "We all create a shared moral ecology

through the daily decisions of our lives. When we stereotype, abuse, impugn motives and lie about each other, we've ripped the social fabric and encouraged more ugliness. When we love across boundaries, listen patiently, see deeply and make someone feel known, we've woven it and reinforced generosity."

When Sue Speed greets a guest at St. John Center, it is often with, "Hi, sweetie. How are you this morning?" A frustrating

morning can begin to turn around when greeted with such kindness.

From the first encounter inside St. John Center to the many hidden administrative tasks, volunteers are essential to the mission.

Last month, 127 volunteers contributed 976 hours of service at the shelter. In the last year, volunteers also laid flooring, painted offices, completed repairs, kept the computers going, managed the transition to the new phone system, installed lockers for the new storage facility, and addressed hundreds upon hundreds of envelopes.

More important than the functions

volunteers perform is the spirit in which they do them. Volunteers are an important part of the safety net that helps our clients feel welcomed into a healing space and encouraged to try, try again. Former clients return to St. John Center to visit volunteers just as much as they like to check in with staff. To be seen, feel heard, be helped, and called by name. Aren't these things we all want? St. John Center volunteers weave their loving presence into the daily life of the shelter, and the tapestry they create is strong and beautiful.

Maria A. Price
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Executive Director



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THANK YOU FOR A WONDERFUL

Raisin' the Rent

On March 2, a full house of nearly 500 friends and neighbors gathered at the Mellwood Art & Entertainment Center to Raise the Rent!

"The community responds to this party because they know how important St. John Center services are to our homeless neighbors," said St. John Center executive director Maria Price. "Their passion fuels the event's fun-factor and their generosity funds the mission.

It makes for a great night!"

Together we raised approximately \$270,000 to continue our mission of accompanying homeless men as they seek help, find hope, and move home. The support from sponsors, attendees, and all those who helped us "Fund the Mission" benefits our clients all year long.

A very special thank you to our co-presenting sponsors Charah Solutions and Atria Senior Living.

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