



September 2019

DAYLIGHT

Happenings at St. John Center for Homeless Men

St. John Center
for HOMELESS MEN



"I gave them the opportunity to talk in a quiet place."

- Sister Jeanne

HEY SISTER!

One of the most common refrains heard from St. John Center clients has been "I need to talk to Sister Jeanne" or the friendly greeting "Hey Sister!" On July 19, after nearly two decades, Sr. Jeanne Ellen Niehaus, OSB, retired from her position of social services coordinator.

Sister Jeanne's farewell messages from the men she counseled reveal how they feel about her. "She's a blessing to us," "the backbone of this place," "the only one I trusted," "she wants the best for you," "she was always there ready to help," "she is one of a kind," and "everybody loves her."

Sister Jeanne's approach reflects the culture of care at St. John Center. "When they came to see me we closed the door and I told them all their troubles were out there. I gave them the opportunity to talk in a quiet place. I spent a few minutes getting to know them," she explained. "We had long conversations about their lives and goals. I taught them to do what needs to be done to get to a better place. I taught them every day what it takes to survive."

"She is what St. John's is all about. Her first priority was the men who came in the door and providing for their needs with the resources available," said longtime volunteer Jack Lydon. "She was not walked over, but walked with. We should all be so fortunate to have her deep faith, calmness of spirit and quiet dignity."

"Sister Jeanne helped instill a culture of peace and true compassionate care for each individual at SJC," said Sarah Buckler, Permanent Supportive Housing manager. "She knew almost all the guests by name, took the time to really listen to them and learn about their lives, and kept her calm and cool demeanor, staying in the present, no matter what was going on around her."

Sister Jeanne is back in her hometown enjoying her two families, the one she was born into, and the religious order she has served for more than 50 years.

Thank you is not enough, Sister Jeanne. You are at the heart of St. John Center.

FISCAL YEAR IN REVIEW - 2019

192

Number of men who moved off the streets and into permanent housing this fiscal year. Forty-two were veterans who received housing from the VA, and 20 were added to St. John Center housing programs.

1,818

Number of men who visited the shelter 60,788 times for a daily average of 166.

499

Number of individuals who were provided direct service & referrals by the Street Outreach between January 21 and June 30.

17

Number of men awarded disability benefits with the help of Legal Aid. Legal Aid Society staff works from SJC twice a week. 84 cases were opened over the course of the year.

39

Number of men who obtained permanent, full-time work, 11 of whom moved into their own housing this year.

12

Percent of clients who are veterans. The percentage of veterans was 29% in 2010, underscoring the efficacy of housing as a solution to homelessness.

99

Percent of the men in our Permanent Supportive Housing Program who retained their housing for longer than 12 months.



Steadfast and Humble.

Steadfast and humble are two words that describe Sister Jeanne Niehaus. After homelessness was headline news of the 1980's and well before the recent spate of headlines highlighting street homelessness, Sister Jeanne was providing person after person practical support, offering hope along the way.

D.S. told me this about Jeanne. "I was new on the streets and people kept

saying, 'Go to St. John's. They'll help you there.' So I found St. John Center," D.S. explained. "The first person to help me was Sister Jeanne. I opened up to her, which is something I don't really do, but she has a way. I realized that she made me feel so good that the next day I came back for more! She told me I deserved housing, that nobody should have to stay stuck in their mental illness. She gave me hope that I could live in recovery."

D.S. reconnected to family and has had housing of his own for longer than a decade. Sister Jeanne didn't have apartment keys to hand over – we rarely

do. Instead, she offered a supportive hand for the many humble tasks D.S. needed to complete, and a supportive ear to help him overcome his fears.

All of us who are part of St. John Center learned from Jeanne's approach and strive to emulate her calm, steadfast and humble service. With your support, we will be here for as long as we are needed.

Maria A. Price
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Executive Director



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Save the Date

Open House

Wednesday, October 2, 2019
3 PM—6 PM

Celebrate the completion of the
**Dan and Rosie Lockard Annex to the
Day Shelter and Social Services Center**
700 E. Muhammad Ali Blvd
Food, Friends, Tours
Short Program at 4 PM



Wish List

- Coffee Creamer (powdered, bulk, no packets)
- Ground Coffee (unflavored)
- Coffee Filters (must be at least 9.75 inches in diameter)
- Artificial Sweetener (packets, not bulk)
- Ceramic Coffee Mugs (8 oz., dishwasher safe)
- Mens White Athletic Socks (crew length)

You can order these items and more on St. John Center's Amazon Wish List.