



GMC NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGETOWN MINISTRY CENTER

Goals and Objectives

For the past couple of months we've been focusing on management. We talked about logic models and Dymenn Sasser, our Business Manager, did research and built a fantastic logic model to guide us. We talked about how we measure success. This is hard to do in our business. Sometimes the hardest won success is getting someone on the street to acknowledge you and say hi. Sometimes it is moving someone into a new home. It is different for each person and at each moment. But in this process we have begun to talk about measurable objectives, outputs, and outcomes. If our goal is to get each person off the street, what are the parts that lead to that? Of course they need a shower and clean clothes. That is the easy part, but they also need identification and help filling out applications for SSDI, SSI, and housing. Even though we were only beginning this reflective process, it was affecting our outcomes. I can tell you that we always ask people if they are interested in applying for SSI. Maybe we were asking more or maybe differently but suddenly people were saying yes. We started five SSI applications in June and July, more than in the previous year. It takes time but they are all good solid cases that I feel good about.

At the same time, Roy Witherspoon, our Outreach Director, mentioned one of our members at a meeting with other providers. Dallas Williams of DHS happened to be at the meeting and immediately determined that he would do everything he could to get her into housing. An application was fast-tracked through the city agency responsible for housing homeless people. Roy ran into a landlord with a newly renovated building who was actively seeking people with housing vouchers. She had several units.

At the same time Roy was also working with another member, a veteran. This member had received a voucher from a VA housing program. Roy said to the landlord, "I have another." The landlord said, "Great!"



Judy signs a lease!

A few days later, Roy ran into another member who happened to be a veteran. "Want housing?" Roy asked. "Sure," was the unexpected response. As it happened there were still slots in the VA program and the landlord still had vacancies.

It did not hurt that all of these people, who we thought would be very hard to move, knew each other. They had all lived together in our shelter this past winter. They liked each other and this turned out to be the most important ingredient in getting them to accept the housing that they had shied away from in the past.

There was hard work involved, there is no doubt, but there was a lot of luck too.

—*Gunther Stern*

Management Retreat with MBAs

One day in July, I received a call from Jake, an MBA intern for Danaher Corporation. He was part of a group of six MBA interns who were coming to the District to do community service projects, and Jake offered us the group's knowledge and expertise on pretty much anything we needed help with. Talk about perfect timing: GMC staff had just had a series of conversations about measuring and reporting data for donors and grantors, tracking different kinds of client data, and more effectively using social media.

After a conference call and a brief initial meeting to discuss our obstacles, this amazing group came to GMC for four hours on a Friday afternoon to help us with the beginnings of a solution. We could not have asked for a better group of consultants; the six MBA interns -- Andrew, Bryce, Danish, Fiete, Jake, and Trip -- separated into groups and worked with staff to tackle various action steps. A few made phone calls to grantors. Some worked with staff to draw a roadmap to success for our members. A couple worked on a spreadsheet for us to record our data. Every hour or so we all met up as a big group to discuss our progress and critique each other's work.

In the end, these Danaher interns left us with the rough draft of a metrics dashboard so that we can record all of our goals, progress, failures, and successes. Above all, I think, they left us energized, excited, and motivated to work even harder to end homelessness one person at a time.

—*Stephanie Chan*



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Dr. Koshes: Many Years of Dedication

Dr. Ron Koshes, who has been coming to GMC once a week since the mid 90s to see guests in our Center and on the street, has a wish: that more people entering the profession of psychiatry would



"Dr. Ron" talks to a homeless patient

consider working with the homeless. Why? "There's a big return," Dr. Koshes says. "Instead of making a small change in someone with lots of resources, why not make a big change for someone with very few?"

One afternoon while doing street outreach in 100-degree weather, Dr. Koshes explained to me that he believes everyone has a purpose, a destiny, greater end, a telos -- whatever one prefers to call it -- and that someone suffering from mental illness cannot reach that end. This is where Dr. Koshes comes into the picture. By helping those with mental illnesses stabilize their lives, he helps them back on a path towards their true purpose.

According to Dr. Koshes, medication is the best solution for getting the mentally ill back on track. He strongly believes that someone with a mental illness cannot give true informed consent to refuse medication. "I always tell them to try it," Dr. Koshes reasons, "and if they don't like the way it makes them feel afterwards, then they can say no. They cannot give true informed consent because their ability to think, reason, and behave is impaired by the disease of mental illness. The informed consent they give when they take the medication is that they want to feel better." Often, his patients discover that they can function again, that they are able to rejoin society, and that Dr. Koshes was right.

But Dr. Koshes does so much more than just prescribe medications and talk to people. He writes Medical Summary Reports for our guests' SSI and SSDI applications. He also urges our homeless veterans to seek assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs, where he also works. Dr. Koshes hopes that his passion for giving back to the community is one that younger generations will develop and nurture throughout their lives.

—Stephanie Chan

Heat Wave

Remember that nasty thunderstorm that knocked out power for many people in and around DC and the never-ending heat wave that took place in July? Did you have a place to go with air conditioning, hot water, computers, and working outlets? For the 400+ guests who pass through our Center every week, their answer is yes. We are fortunate that we did not lose power and that we were able to stay open and continue providing services.

Not only were we open, but just before the storm hit, we expanded our operating hours to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day-- a twenty hour per week increase! We are so happy we made this decision. Our guests love that we are opening our doors earlier, which prevents a long line from forming outside in the morning. When the weather is bad, our guests can stay out of the rain, cold, and heat longer. If you see someone outside during the day in the heat or cold, send them our way! We will welcome them into our safe haven.

—Stephanie Chan

Dr. Crosland's Commitment

Nine months pregnant and still working! Dr. Catherine Crosland's dedication to her patients is nothing short of incredible. I had the pleasure of performing outreach with Catherine four days before her due date. Later, I heard she was still doing outreach four days after her due date. Baby came eight days late!

I had only been at GMC for about a month, and this was my first time meeting her and my first time on an outreach mission. I was looking forward to observing Catherine with her homeless patients.

"Hi! How are you? Would you want to have your blood pressure checked today? It's free!"

Catherine's approach to each person on the street was friendly and warm, making it easy for others to feel comfortable around her. It was obvious she knew almost everyone we spoke with that day. Catherine comes to us under an agreement with Unity Health Care.

Although it is impossible to do a complete physical with people on the street, she does take the time to check their blood pressure and blood sugar and asks many probing questions. Catherine usually suggests visiting her at a clinic where she can do more complete examinations.

Catherine spoke candidly of an encounter she had with someone who needed her help at the moment she arrived. The man she described was dehydrated and severely hyperglycemic. His condition was serious enough that she called 911 and the man was taken by ambulance to the hospital. Stories like this raise the question of how many people on the street aren't lucky enough to have Catherine's help. Her willingness and enthusiasm to walk up to two or three miles providing services to these people in one of Washington, DC's hottest summers is awesome.

Before working at GMC, Catherine had a rather unconventional job as a doctor at San Quentin prison. "I've always been interested in helping at-risk populations," she commented. This experience helped ready her for work with homeless people. If you can work in a prison you can work anywhere.

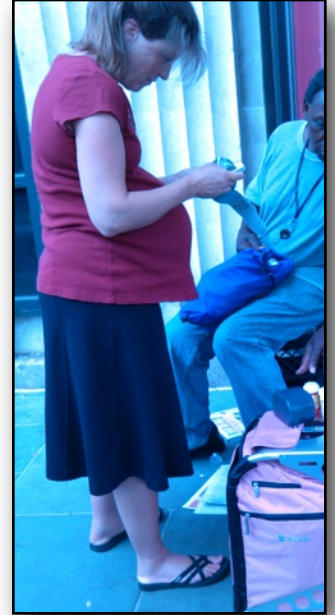
Most of the homeless men we met along the way were curious about Catherine's pregnancy.

"Boy or girl?"

"Everything's top secret," she would say with a smile.

Catherine and her husband decided to wait until the birth to know the sex of the baby. They were surprised with another baby boy. This is the Croslands' second child. They already have a 19-month-old boy, who was also a veteran of in utero outreach! In the meantime, GMC has Unity doctors Diana Lapp and Deborah Kipen filling in for Catherine. We wish Catherine and her husband the best of luck with the new addition to the family!

—Jessica Fitzgerald



Dr. Crosland with patient

Crochet Art at GMC

In last winter's newsletter, we mentioned the success of the knit and crochet group we started at GMC. We have discovered an incredible talent in one of our members who has been churning out crocheted hats, scarves, teddy bears, and a menagerie of zoo animals! Luckily for friends of GMC, everything she has been making is for sale, with all of the money going either to the artist or into a fund for more materials. We have started an online auction on our website (under the "Donate" tab) to feature the most impressive items and are also exploring other options. Grace Church generously gave us part of a table next to the ticket booth at the Taste of Georgetown. In September, we'll have a table at Grace Church's "Music on the Lawn" series. We would greatly appreciate anyone who helps us spread the word. Also, let us know if there are any other avenues we should explore for selling these amazing works of art!

—Stephanie Chan

Georgetown's Congregation Based Shelter

People seem surprised when I say that Georgetown really cares about the homeless who have found their home on the streets in and near Georgetown. Georgetown has been embracing its responsibility to the less fortunate in our midst for more than 25 years through Georgetown Ministry Center. If there is any doubt, look at the shelter that rotates through the churches each winter with a lot of help from Georgetown Synagogue and area businesses. Georgetown cares! This year's shelter opens on November 4th and will carry through to March 31st. Each congregation volunteers for a week or two weeks and in one case up to five weeks (non-consecutive).

If you have never volunteered at the shelter before, I can almost guarantee that it will be an experience that you will not forget and will enjoy immensely.

Dinner volunteers work with others to prepare, serve, and then sit down and enjoy the meal with the residents and staff. The community that develops within the shelter ensures delightful conversations during dinner. Often people put together teams of friends which makes it even more enjoyable, but please be in touch to be sure that a day is available.

Overnight volunteers come in for dinner and then stay the night on a cot we supply. The overnight volunteer arrives at 7 p.m. and helps keep the conversation lively at dinner, then supports the staff person overnight in any emergency that might arise (never happens), and finally helps serve breakfast, clean up, and is out by 7 a.m.

Each congregation has its own set of volunteers and practices. Most of the congregations do need community volunteer support, so if your club, business, or family is interested in putting together a group or if you just want to join one of the existing groups, give us a call at (202) 338-8301.

—Gunther Stern

Board of Directors

<i>Christ Church, Georgetown</i>	Catherine Ballinger Elizabeth Bluhm
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<i>Georgetown Presbyterian Church</i>	Alexander Bullock Pat Davies
<i>Georgetown University</i>	Linda Greenan
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<i>St. John's Episcopal Church</i>	Jocelyn Dyer
<i>St. Luke's United Methodist Church</i>	Dorothy Preston
<i>St. Paul's K Street</i>	Eric Lobsinger
<i>St. Stephen the Martyr</i>	Laura Wilson

And from the community...

<i>Citizens Association of Georgetown</i>	Dick Stoll
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<i>Georgetown Business Association</i>	Elizabeth Webster
<i>Georgetown BID</i>	James Bracco
<i>Georgetown Clergy Association</i>	John Graham

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Program Coordinator	Stephanie Chan
Shower Program Managers	William Jenkins Ameen Simmons Matthew White

Consulting Physicians

Psychiatry	Ron Koshes, M.D.
Family Practice (<i>with Unity Health Care</i>)	Catherine Crosland, M.D.

Development Director	Claire Spencer-Spears
Event Coordinator	Jessica Fitzgerald

Save These Dates

Spirit of Georgetown

Come join us for a night of fun and glamour at Georgetown Ministry Center's annual Spirit of Georgetown event. This year we will be honoring Alan and Nancy Taylor Bubes for their ongoing support of GMC and their many contributions to our organization.

The event will take place on October 17th at the beautiful home of Amy and Mark Tercek located on R Street.

Please visit our website for more information regarding the Spirit of Georgetown as well as to purchase tickets. We look forward to seeing you there! www.spiritofgeorgetown.org

Help the Homeless

Once again, Georgetown Ministry Center will be participating in Fannie Mae's Help the Homeless fundraiser this year. The fundraising period is May through November with multiple events throughout this time. This is our biggest fundraising source of the year and we really need your support to continue to provide services for our members.

This is the first year that the Help the Homeless program will not be doing a walk on the National Mall. We are more reliant than ever on smaller events to raise awareness and monetary donations for our organization.

Please visit the Help the Homeless website to register for an event and/or donate to the Georgetown Ministry Center. Thank you so much for your continued support! www.hthwalks.org

GMC Hosts September 27th Citizens Association Meeting

Georgetown Ministry Center is hosting the September meeting of the Citizens Association of Georgetown at Grace Church. We are planning a program on homelessness and mental illness with a speaker from the Treatment Advocacy Center and our own Dr. Ronald Koshes. It should be fascinating to anyone interested in this major cause of homelessness: mental illness.

Taste of Georgetown

The Taste of Georgetown moved from fall to June 2 this year and it was a huge success. The crowds looked similar (big). The amount raised for Georgetown Ministry Center was about \$28,500—almost \$2,500 more than last September. Thank you, Georgetown!



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