

GMC NEWS



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGETOWN MINISTRY CENTER

BOILING POINT

The heat index was 110 degrees though the thermometer read 103 or 104 depending on where you were. It was hot! It was dangerous. No one should be out in weather like this. We kept the Center open through the day with the air conditioning blasting. GMC was an oasis in the heat for a number of homeless people over the hottest days. On Thursday when I walked with Dr. Catherine Crosland, the medical doctor from Unity Healthcare, it was in the upper 90s. We saw that a number of homeless people had very interesting and effective ways of escaping the heat. It is 15 to 20 degrees cooler under the bridges by the water. First lesson from the homeless folks we serve: Stay out of the direct sun.

As adaptable as our homeless friends are, there are still the ones we have to worry about. You have seen people like him. Driven by symptoms of his mental illness, Sam piles on too much clothing. By too much I mean 3 shirts, 3 pants, 2 coats, and 2 or 3 hats. He has a serious mental illness and overdresses on even the hottest days. When we ask why, he answers dismissively, "I'm OK." When pressed, he might say he really likes this particular jacket or he is saving the clothes for the winter. We think he knows at some level there is something wrong with the amount of clothes he wears but he is compelled, by some internal force, to wear them. I have long ago surrendered to the fact that I will never understand why.

Perhaps the most important part of our job in the summer is to keep an eye on Sam and people like him when the temperature is climbing into the 90s and he has 3 coats on. We start by encouraging him to shed some of the clothing and get out of the sun. We invite him into our Center. He has never followed our advice. Finally, when all else fails, we call the Department of Mental Health's Office of Homeless Services.

We are lucky to have Craig Keller from the Office of Homeless Services at the Center once or twice a week seeing homeless people and assessing them for various housing programs. Craig gets to know the people on our streets and was able to intervene when he spotted Sam wearing 3 coats just as the temperature was nearing 100. When the heat index was 110, Sam was in an air-conditioned hospital room.

Over the past year, Sam has been taken to CPEP (Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program) three times because of extreme weather. This past winter during the worst of the snowstorms he was off the street looking at the snow

(Boiling Point, cont. on p. 2)

CAFÉ/CLUBHOUSE UPDATE

The transition from shower and laundry program to café/clubhouse has been a difficult process. We have drawings — a dream laid out — for transforming our small space into a more effective space. The biggest barrier to breaking ground now is that we have maxed out our electric supply and have to look at ways to either expand the supply or use less. Neither option is going to be cheap.

Though we can't start construction yet, we have rearranged furniture and turned former staff space into program space. Computers are now sitting on tables for clients to use, and clients are no longer called clients. Are they members or friends or something else? We are not sure yet.

We hope to adopt a variation on the clubhouse model in which there is a limited hierarchy of authority and even then a blurring of the lines (Google the words "clubhouse model" for a more complete understanding; Wikipedia has a nice article). We want to ensure an environment in which each individual is respected and valued. This is not to say that this was not the case before, but there was an authoritarian nature to the environment in which staff imposed rules (very gently) and clients followed the line (usually with cheerful alacrity). We still need order and a way to respond when someone is not allowing others to enjoy the space in peace.

As the space has changed shape it has been an interesting transition to watch. At first it was difficult to get the folks out of the crowded waiting room and into the back where they could sit at tables, drink coffee, and read the paper or a book in relative peace.

It has also been interesting watching GMC staff try to adapt to the new way — at first protecting their space and then gingerly letting go. It has been a process, and it will continue to be an enriching process.

—*Gunther Stern*

FACEBOOK



We now have a Facebook page! Search for us by typing in Georgetown Ministry Center, and then join our group by clicking the silver "like" button at the top. We are happy to help anyone figure this out, or if you would like to set up an account from scratch, Gunther and Malini are experts and can guide you through the set-up. Feel free to contact us!

(Boiling Point, cont. from p. 1)

through a window in the relative comfort of St. Elizabeth's Hospital in a heated ward.

Often, involuntary hospitalization is the only way we can successfully bring a seriously mentally ill person into the proximity of treatment. An involuntary hospitalization does not necessarily mean that the patient will get treatment. It only allows the hospital to hold the "patient" for observation. The hospital can only encourage treatment (see *Petitions and Court Orders* below).

Even though this process often ends with the patient being released without adequate treatment, sometimes repeated visits to CPEP and St. Elizabeth's do lead to a successful intervention. That is what we work toward with each interaction. If we are not successful the first time, we just keep trying. Our ultimate goal at Georgetown Ministry Center is always: reduce harm, stabilize, and move off the street.

Sam is back on the street as disheveled and disorganized as ever, but so far he has not added the extra coats that worried us. We will keep our eyes on him and hope for the best.

Postscript

As we were about to submit this to the editor, psychiatrist Ron Koshes, who works with us one day a week, observed Sam walking in traffic and eating from a garbage can. He noticed that Sam had fouled himself multiple times recently; a fresh urine stream was running down his pant legs. Ron insisted we initiate the FD-12 process. The process requires by law that the patient be transported by the police.

At some point an ambulance was called. One of the paramedics pointed out rightfully that they could not transport him but then asked why we were doing this: "He's just a street person. I see him all the time." This is part of the problem. The professionals who are often the first responders in cases like this have devalued these lives. We cannot solve the problem until we recognize that these are human beings like you and me, with mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers. They have serious illnesses that are very hard to treat. Does this mean we give up trying? And most important, we have to reevaluate the right of a seriously mentally ill person to refuse treatment.

—*Gunther Stern*

PETITIONS AND COURT ORDERS

The involuntary hospitalization process is called FD-12 and is a petition for an involuntary psychiatric assessment. This is only for observation and assessment. A hearing is required within a set amount of time, about a week, in which a decision is made about continued hospitalization. The patient is entitled to legal representation and gets it as a matter of practice.

A court order is needed to involuntarily medicate patients and that is rarely done. Forcing treatment is usually reserved for situations in which the patient's life might otherwise be in jeopardy. Unfortunately, severe mental illness fogs insight and impairs judgment and reasoning. We believe (as does our psychiatrist, Dr. Ron Koshes) that many of those patients are not competent to refuse treatment.

MEET OUR STAFF

Malini Suri, Our Newest

Hello! My name is Malini Suri, and I am excited to introduce myself as the newest addition to the GMC staff. My official title is Program Coordinator, and my responsibilities include volunteer coordination, event planning, community and donor relations, and of course being a part of the overall team. If you have any questions or ideas concerning these topics, feel free to email me at malini@gmcgt.org.

I graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 2008 with a degree in zoology, and came to DC to pursue the non-profit world. Before coming to GMC, I was a communications intern with the Pew Charitable Trusts' environment group, advocating for wilderness areas in the US.



Malini Suri

So far, the staff has been very welcoming and I have been impressed by their work. Everyone here is dedicated to the well-being of our clients and clearly enjoys working with them. Some days can be tough, but others are also very rewarding. I have been busy learning the ropes and strengthening my skills. Gunther is teaching me the value of online organization—using Google Docs, for example—skills that we hope to pass on to our clients! I

have also been coordinating this year's Spirit of Georgetown and Help the Homeless Walk-a-thon. I look forward to meeting many of you at our upcoming events.

Roy Witherspoon

Roy Witherspoon plays an important and integral part in the management team at the Georgetown Ministry Center, coordinating and overseeing the day-to-day operations of our Drop-in Center, as well as managing our client services and our individual case management. He supervises our outreach staff and volunteers, and ensures proper data collection for our programs. He also plays an important role in the lives of our clients, acting as a friend and mentor.

Roy graduated in 2000 from Lincoln University with a master's in human services. He has also had a variety of specialized training including suicide prevention, dealing with aggression, and HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. Over the years, Roy has gained extensive experience as a counselor, working with individuals to address their needs and achieve their goals. Before GMC, Roy served as the Senior Counselor at Hearts and Homes for Youths where he oversaw the program participants as well as fellow staff. In his spare time, Roy enjoys playing chess, reading, and spending time outdoors.

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(Staff, cont. from p. 2)



Nathan Clark and Roy Witherspoon

Nathan Clark

Nathan Clark does the bulk of our street outreach. He considers himself a friend of many of our clients. Besides working days at our Drop-in Center, Nathan spends afternoons doing outreach on foot, engaging new clients and checking up on those who don't often visit the Center. On Thursdays, Nathan does night outreach with Unity Healthcare through their Mobile Outreach Unit. In this way, we can help bring much-needed medical services directly to our homeless friends.

Nathan finished his MSW degree at University of Maryland through the Shriver Peace Worker Fellowship in Baltimore. During this fellowship he also worked as a program coordinator at a homeless shelter in West Baltimore. Before this he and his wife were youth and community development Peace Corps volunteers in the Sahara desert of Morocco. Nathan now has a beautiful son, Miles, and enjoys hiking, reading, and playing guitar.

—Malini Suri

SANDWICH HELP

Georgetown Ministry Center is in need of sandwich assistance. We are hoping to find a few new volunteers to donate 20-30 sandwiches on a weekly or monthly basis. PB&J, turkey and cheese, bologna, vegetarian, white bread, or wheat bread...anything goes.

The sandwiches are typically given out to our drop-in clients, or distributed to local homeless during our outreach sessions. We would ideally like to have two people a day bringing sandwiches, at 10 a.m. and noon. If you are interested in participating, please contact Malini at (202) 316-6466.



Board of Directors

<i>Christ Church, Georgetown</i>	Catherine Ballinger Elizabeth Bluhm
<i>Dumbarton United Methodist Church</i>	Martha Dickey Ester Dijkstra
<i>Epiphany Roman Catholic Church</i>	Susan Gschwendner Won Park
<i>First Baptist Church, Georgetown</i>	Barbara Hargroves Vinette Saunders
<i>Georgetown Lutheran Church</i>	Connie Baker Christine Traugott
<i>Georgetown Presbyterian Church</i>	Alexander Bullock Tracy Davis
<i>Georgetown University</i>	Linda Greenan
<i>Grace Episcopal Church</i>	Drew Davis Kimberly Ludwig
<i>Holy Trinity Catholic Church</i>	Linda Formella Joe Ryan
<i>Kesher Israel, Georgetown Synagogue</i>	Jessica Ribner
<i>Mt. Zion United Methodist Church</i>	Essie Page
<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>	Jackie Durham

And from the community...

<i>Citizens Association of Georgetown</i>	Dick Stoll
<i>Community Representative</i>	Beth Neilsen
<i>Georgetown Business Association</i>	Rokas Beresniovas
<i>Georgetown BID</i>	James Bracco
<i>Georgetown Clergy Association</i>	John Graham

Officers

President	Joe Ryan
Vice President	Dick Stoll
Treasurer	John Lange
Secretary	Jocelyn Dyer

Staff

Executive Director	Gunther Stern
Outreach Director	Roy Witherspoon
Business Manager	Quan "Nick" Zhou
Program Coordinator	Malini Suri
Outreach Staff	Nathan Clark
Shower Program Managers	Bram Houben Tobias Brown
Consulting Psychiatrist	Ron Koshes, M.D.
Development Director	Claire Spencer-Spears

TASTE OF GEORGETOWN

On Saturday, October 9th, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the 17th annual Taste of Georgetown will showcase the spectacular cuisine of 30 of Washington, D.C.'s finest restaurants including Georgetown Cupcake, Baked and Wired, and Agraria Farmers & Fishers. While you eat, enjoy the jazz talents of Blues Alley musicians. This year's event will also feature a wine and beer pavilion on the lawn of Grace Church with samples from breweries such as Flying Dog and Sierra Nevada. This event has become the premier food and wine festival of D.C. and benefits Georgetown Ministry Center's services supporting the homeless. You can purchase tickets at the event: \$5 for one taste, \$20 for five tastes. Visit tasteofgeorgetown.com for more information.

SPIRIT OF GEORGETOWN

This year's Spirit of Georgetown benefit will take place on Thursday, October 14th, at 6:30 p.m. The event will be held in honor of Rev. Stuart Kenworthy, Christ Church, Georgetown, for his many contributions to the community and for his keen support of the Georgetown Ministry Center for so many years, with special thanks going to Fran Kenworthy and their children as well. The benefit will take place at the home of Mr. and Mrs. David Howe, a meticulously restored 1840s property and the former home of Yolande Fox, the 1951 Miss America. In previous years, Ms. Fox received many notable guests including

Warren Beatty, Diane Keaton, and several senior Carter Administration staffers during the Carter years. Funds raised through the Spirit of Georgetown benefit are critical to allowing Georgetown Ministry Center to continue providing the homeless community with our essential services. We look forward to seeing you there.



2010 Spirit of Georgetown House (photo: David Reeve)

Georgetown Ministry Center
1041 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20007

Upcoming Events

Taste of Georgetown: October 9
Spirit of Georgetown: October 14
Georgetown Fun-Day: October 17
HTH Walk-a-thon: November 20

23 Years of Service to Georgetown



2010 mini-walk
program

SAVE THE DATE!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17TH

GRACE CHURCH, 1:30-3:00 P.M.

GEORGETOWN FUN-DAY HELP THE HOMELESS MINI-WALK

Come enjoy the last of the warm weather this October on the lawn of Grace Church (1041 Wisconsin Ave., NW). This event is for the whole family. We are hoping to have a variety of activities including face painting, music, ice cream, balloons, and fall-themed crafts. If you or anyone you know would like to help out, have ideas for activities, clowns, magicians, or less-talented folks who would like to practice their balloon-tying skills, please contact Malini Suri at malini@gmcgt.org, (202) 316-6466.

To register for this event, simply fill out the form on the back of this page, visit www.georgetownministrycenter.org/GMC/miniwalk.html, or call (202) 338-8301. The cost is \$25 per adult (26 and over), \$15 per youth—register one or all of your family members, or register at the event! **Register by October 1st to receive a T-shirt at the event!** (If you register at the event, you will receive a T-shirt at a later date.) Help us reach our goal this year of 200 participants! This event will be held instead of the congregation mini-walks.

MAIN FANNIEMAE 5K WALK-A-THON

The 2010 main FannieMae Foundation Help the Homeless 5K Walk-a-thon will take place Saturday, November 20th, at 9:00 a.m. on the National Mall. You can register for this walk online at www.helpthehomelessdc.org. Don't forget to designate Georgetown Ministry Center as the non-profit you are walking for, DC-037. As with the mini-walk, the cost is \$25 per adult (26 and over), \$15 per youth, and includes a T-shirt. All proceeds will benefit Georgetown Ministry Center's daily activities: shower and laundry program, street outreach, case work, psychiatric outreach/medication management, and the list goes on. Please come and support all our efforts to combat homelessness in the DC area.

Virtual Walker Registration

This year, anyone can register for the walk! If you or anyone you know cannot actually walk, or you would like to register friends and family members who live outside DC, show your support by registering as a Virtual Walker online at www.helpthehomelessdc.org. Anyone in the world can register! Simply designate Georgetown Ministry Center DC-037 as the beneficiary. Registration is \$30. T-shirt is not included but can be purchased for an extra \$15. Another way to support GMC!



Georgetown Fun-Day Mini-Walk
 Sunday, October 17th
 Grace Church, 1:30-3:00 P.M.

General Mini-Walk Walker Registration Form

To register as a walker in a Help the Homeless Mini-Walk, complete and submit this form. The walker's signature –or the signature of a qualified parent or guardian for walkers less than 18 years old– is required.

* Required Fields

WALKER REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Name*:

Age*:

Name of Hosting Organization*:

HELP THE HOMELESS T-SHIRT INFORMATION (T-shirt is optional. Some Mini-Walk participants decline.)

Do you want a 2010 Help the Homeless T-shirt? * Yes No

If you want a T-shirt, please indicate size: Youth XL Adult XL

REGISTRATION FEE

\$15 Youth \$25 Adult Additional Donation Amount:

Total Amount Due⁺:

PAYMENT METHOD (Cash is not accepted)

Check/Money Order: *Make payable to "Fannie Mae Help the Homeless/CFNCR"*

Credit Card: (Please choose one) Visa MasterCard American Express Discover

Credit Card Number:

Expiration Date:

I authorize the amount of \$ _____ to be charged to my credit card.

Cardholder Name:

Signature:

Fannie Mae is working with the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region (CFNCR), who will assist Fannie Mae in the administration of the Help the Homeless Program. CFNCR is a tax exempt 501 (c) (3) organization (Tax ID# 23-7343119). +Your registration fee and any additional donation is tax deductible as a charitable contribution to the fullest extent of the law.

SIGNATURE OF WALKER (Parent/guardian if under 18 years of age)

I have full knowledge of the risks involved with, and understand that I could be injured during, the Help the Homeless event (the "Event"). I agree to assume all risks of such injury. I unconditionally release and discharge Fannie Mae and all other persons and entities involved with this Event from any and all claims, damages, and expenses that may arise directly or indirectly from my participation in this Event. I understand that neither Fannie Mae nor any of the other sponsors, individuals, or groups involved in the coordination of this Event makes any representations or warranties about the fitness or condition of the public parks, streets, or trails that will be used for the Event, and I agree that none of those parties is responsible for the maintenance or condition of those parks, streets, or trails, or for the public safety thereon. I hereby certify that I am able to participate in this Event without harm to myself or others. I hereby grant Fannie Mae and its licensees, the irrevocable right to use and publish, for any purpose whatsoever and without compensation, any photographs, video recordings, or motion pictures of my likeness, voice, portrait, testimonial statement, if any, and to refer to me and my name, title, city, and state of residence in relation thereto, in all media and promotion of Fannie Mae in connection with my participation in the Event.

Signature*:

Date*: