



GMC NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GEORGETOWN MINISTRY CENTER

IF ONLY THEY UNDERSTOOD

I had a heart attack this past January. The symptoms were mild, and I reacted to warning signs without delay. I knew something was wrong, and I sought help. On the other hand, tens of thousands of people with a major mental illness have literally no idea that they have a mental illness impairing their ability to function, interact, and behave within the expectations of society. Their world is a jumble of bizarre thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions.

They attract our attention and evoke pity, but they scare and repel us. Sometimes they make us laugh when they do silly things, but it is a tragedy nonetheless. Seventy years ago they would have languished in an asylum, filthy with urine, unbathed, poorly clothed if at all. Forty years ago they would have lived in an institution in a pastoral setting, removed from the general population, likely overmedicated but bathed, fed, and clothed for the most part. Now they live on the streets, smelling of urine, unbathed, poorly clothed if at all, and eating from trash cans. Progress?

They are out there because the policies have changed over the years, reacting to the poor treatment in institutions in the early part of the twentieth century. State hospitals have reduced their censuses dramatically over the past 40 years. Don't get me wrong, many people have benefited from the changes. Community services have expanded over the same period. Medicine available to treat psychotic disorders has improved dramatically over the past 40 years. Many people who could not live independently in the past now can. But not all people respond well to medicine, and a subset of people with mental illness also have a condition known as anosognosia, which prevents them from understanding that the intrusive thoughts, voices, and paranoia they are experiencing are not real. They are the majority that end up on our streets due to mental illness. They are the homeless problem that will probably not go away until we change some of the policies and make it easier to intervene.

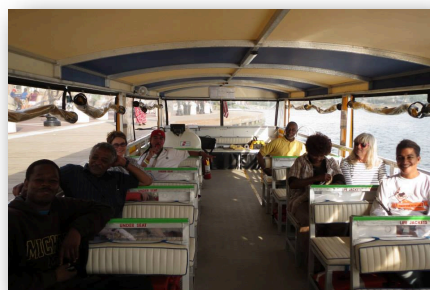
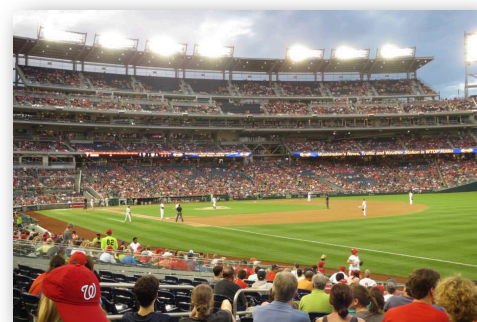
Please stand up for homeless people with serious mental illness. Please demand a review of policies that allow people to languish on the street without care.

(If Only, cont. on p. 2)

TAKE US OUT TO THE BALLGAME

On August 9, Georgetown Ministry Center had its very first outing. We were able to take a group of our amazing members to a Nationals game! Thanks to superstar volunteer Maggie Handel, we were able to invite the members in our Center who regularly help us keep our Center and our alley clean, who help manage the computer lab, and who help defuse heated situations in the Center. It felt great to be able to thank and celebrate our members.

After Maggie and Stephanie had their request for Nationals tickets approved, Maggie arranged for transportation and food. Most people take the Metro or Circulator to the game and have to deal with massive traffic and crowds. Not us! We arrived and left in style via American River Taxi! Everyone loved riding on the water taxi, and seeing the monuments from the Potomac was breathtaking. Shaun Guevarra, President of American River Taxi, was able to offer us round-trip tickets for the price of one-way tickets, and we were



able to raise 87% of our transportation cost through a small fundraiser we held online. A huge thank you to everyone who donated and helped get the word out for us. And, if you are planning on going to a game soon, everyone who went on this trip would definitely recommend taking the water taxi.

(Ballgame, cont. on p. 2)



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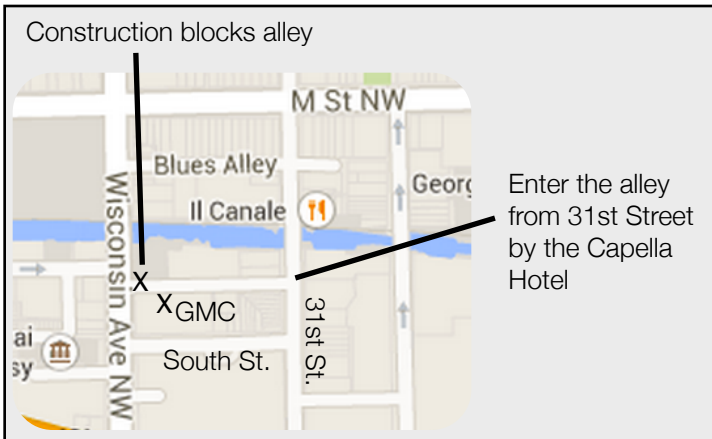


WHERE ARE WE?

After 25 years with our door to Wisconsin Avenue, we are lost. Well, we know where we are, but you will probably not find us easily. A DC ambulance couldn't find us, even after repeated calls. The construction project at 1055 Wisconsin, next door, got a public space permit that has closed the alley we are off of from Wisconsin Avenue to our door. You have to enter the alley from 31st Street just below the Capella Hotel.

We are fighting for an outlet to Wisconsin Avenue, and I hope that we will have it back by the time you read this.

—*Gunther Stern*



TASTE OF GEORGETOWN

For anyone who was there enjoying the food, the Taste was a huge success. The lines were shorter, the crowds on the easy side of manageable, and the food was, as usual, out of this world. Trouble is, it was a little hot and ticket sales were down. Sponsorship was off some too. The BID staff worked hard to make this the most successful Taste event ever but in the end, the Taste of Georgetown lost money. Not a lot, but since it is the profit that is donated to us, we would have lost out. However, the Georgetown BID did not want to leave us empty-handed, and we are grateful for the donation of \$20,000, which helps ensure our continued success.

(If Only, cont. from p. 1)

The problem as I see it is:

- Not enough quality housing. There is a waiting list.
- Not enough emergency care. The hospitals are rewarded for discharging people in a week whether or not they are better.
- A system that has become jaded over the years by laws and policies that hamstringing it, including impossible caseloads and documentation requirements that leave the case worker working on reports more than seeing people.
- Most important, a system that has to rely on voluntary compliance from people who do not understand that they need help.

Check out www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org for suggestions for better laws and policies. Tell your representatives that finding solutions for homeless people with mental illnesses is an important issue.

—*Gunther Stern*

NEW FACES AT GMC

This summer Dr. Sandeep Denduluri, a psychiatric resident from George Washington University, joined our Center staff, working once a week for four hours. Dr. Denduluri sees people in our Center for the first part of his tour and then joins me on street outreach. We walk between two and four miles on our route through Georgetown and nearby neighborhoods. Dr. Denduluri brings a fresh set of eyes to our program and the people we serve.

—*Gunther Stern*

In May, Ricardo Cooper joined our team as a part-time Shower and Laundry Manager. His poise and enthusiasm made us take notice, and in August, we brought him on board as a full-time Program Coordinator so that he could manage and bring more wonderful programming to our clubhouse.

A DC native, Ricardo spent some of his childhood in foster care. However, Ricardo worked hard, graduated as valedictorian of his high school class, and received a full scholarship to Kentucky State University. After graduating and moving back to DC, Ricardo began working at the SEED School in southeast DC as a Residential Advisor, and soon after that started working at GMC as well. The guests immediately loved Ricardo, his sense of humor, and his ability to listen.

When asked about why he wanted to work with the homeless and how he feels about his new role at GMC, Ricardo said, "I am passionate about working with the homeless—they are human beings just like us; they have the same needs as we do. They just need an extra push and proper resources to help them attain those needs. I have yet to have a stressful day at GMC, as crazy as that may sound; I enjoy coming to work every day."

Ricardo hopes "to make Georgetown Ministry Center a better place for the guests we serve and the volunteers and donors that assist us in our mission and values. With the guests in mind, GMC will become more of a positive and encouraging community, because we are all equal despite our job title or status in life."

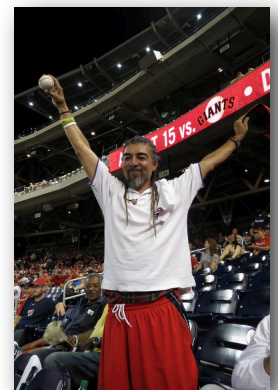
—*Stephanie Chan*

(Ballgame, cont. from p. 2)

Once we arrived at the stadium, we picked up half smokes, chips, and drinks courtesy of the Ben's Chili Bowl concession stand and made our way over to our seats. As we chowed down on our dogs, we watched the Nationals' score go up and up.

The highlight of the night? One of our guests caught a fly ball! What a wonderful night. Great weather, great people, great game. Thank you so much to everyone who helped make this night possible and to our wonderful guests who help clean our Center and alley day after day!

—*Stephanie Chan*



SPIRIT OF GEORGETOWN

You know what I am talking about. It is the best party in Georgetown each year. It is also our most important special event of the year. By now you know that GMC and CAG and a few others have failed to talk to each other this year. So this year the third week in October is Georgetown Party Week. You must go immediately to www.spiritofgeorgetown.org and reserve your spot at our important event honoring Page Evans on October 17th. But don't stop there. Friday night is the CAG Gala. Two nights with your best friends in Georgetown is too good to be true and you will be helping the two best organizations in Georgetown while you are doing it. OK if you look at it the wrong way it's a lot of money but you know you were coming to both events. You just weren't expecting them to be in the same week. Oh well. A lot of fun.

The big problem is going to be the lull after. Don't worry, we have something for you on Sunday too (see below) and then there is the CAG meeting and a few other fun events in the following weeks. Do it all!

HELP THE HOMELESS

Georgetown University will host this year's Help the Homeless event on October 20th at noon on campus. Students and faculty are working together to host the entire community in an event that should provide fun for all. Be prepared to walk! Eat! And have some fun.

Sign up online at hthwalks.org and look for Georgetown Ministry Center among the beneficiaries. We are DC037. Follow the prompts to register. As in the past, youth (25 and under) are \$20, older participants \$30. This will be the only event GMC is holding and we need at least 250 walkers. Come join us! Call (202)338-8301 ext. 7 for info.

THANK YOU FOUNDATIONS!

Special thanks to our core Foundations that have supported us consistently throughout these tough financial times. Many of you have supported us for the past two decades, starting when we were still very much defining and searching for the most effective ways to make a difference. Your support continues to allow GMC to grow as well as maintain the much-needed services and programs that the homeless population we serve relies on. As we near the end of our fiscal year, we are mindful of how fortunate we are to have exceeded our budgeted goals in Foundation contributions, which will help to eliminate the budgeted shortfall of revenues we previously projected.

We are so grateful to: The World Bank Group, John Dickson Home, The Georgetown BID, The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, The Park Foundation, The Philip L. Graham Fund, William S. Abell Foundation, Inc., Fannie Mae Foundation (Help the Homeless Program), Washington, D.C. Alumnae Foundation, John Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation, Prince Charitable Trusts, Rotary Foundation of Washington, W. O'Neil Foundation Inc., and those who wish to remain Anonymous.

—*Claire Spencer-Spears*

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<i>St. Stephen the Martyr</i>	Laura Wilson

And from the community...

<i>Citizens Association of Georgetown</i>	Dick Stoll
<i>Community Representatives</i>	Pierre Moyer Beth Neilsen
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<i>Georgetown BID</i>	John Weibenson
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Shower Program Managers	William Jenkins Lucane LaFortune

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Psychiatric Resident (with GWU)	Sandeep Denduluri, M.D.
Family Practice (with Unity Health Care)	Catherine Crosland, M.D.

Development Director

Claire Spencer-Spears

CATALOGUE FOR PHILANTHROPY ANNOUNCEMENT

Georgetown Ministry Center is proud to announce that the Catalogue for Philanthropy will be featuring GMC's good work in their 2013-14 Catalogue. A panel of over 100 expert reviewers from area foundations, corporate giving programs, and peer nonprofit organizations evaluated over 210 applications, and Georgetown Ministry Center is one of 73 outstanding nonprofits to be featured in print this year. We are so pleased that the Catalogue for Philanthropy is recognizing how much we have grown and developed. In the past two years, we have more than doubled the operating hours of our Drop-in Center. On top of the shower and laundry services, computer lab, and safe escape from the street that our Center provides, we have honed the impact and effectiveness of our case management skills, expanded medical care with an additional psychiatrist, and created important programming in our Center that includes counseling and other support groups.



Executive Director Gunther Stern says that “the Catalogue’s designation assures donors that their money is providing the highest quality services to the people we serve.” He hopes that being accepted into the Catalogue for Philanthropy will “encourage donors and volunteers to give generously to ensure that GMC can continue to provide high quality services to the most vulnerable members of our community.”

The Catalogue strives to connect caring citizens with worthy community causes through its printed and online Catalogue (cfp-dc.org). The new Catalogue will not be live until November 1 so don't go looking for us just yet. We hope you will take the opportunity to read more about our work, stay connected, and become involved with GMC on the Catalogue's website or on our website (www.gmcgt.org).

—Stephanie Chan

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