



GMC NEWS

The Newsletter of the Georgetown Ministry Center



Georgetown Cares

Georgetown has an undeserved reputation for being an aloof, affluent community that sets itself above the needs of the rest of the city. And yet Georgetown Ministry Center thrives mostly on the support of our affluent neighbors, who I can tell you do care.

I get calls regularly from housed people who are concerned about a particular homeless man or woman. “He looks sick,” or “She doesn’t have shoes.” People will ask me how they can help the man they discovered sleeping in the park or who comes around for an odd job.

Georgetowners are open-minded and giving. I have learned that many in this community don’t just support GMC, but they also support other similar causes around the city. They serve on the boards of just about every program helping the poor and give generously to many causes.

The Georgetown Ministry Center board of directors is filled with Georgetowners. Over the years I have come to know many as friends because of their time on the board and our common concern for people who are homeless. The compassion of Georgetowners is second to none!

From the beginning, GMC was a project founded by Georgetowners who were alarmed at the hypothermia death of Freddie, an elderly homeless man in Georgetown. They responded with a small program to provide some basic services for people living on the street. Over the years we expanded into an organization that provides much more thanks to the generous support of our community. The showers, laundry, and computers would not exist without the help of Georgetowners.

One of our neighbors walks by weekly, dog leash in one hand, bags of sandwiches in the other hand. Another Georgetowner, when in town, brings around fifty nicely crafted Boeymonger sandwiches with salads that he enjoys serving himself. He stays for nearly an hour to ensure that everyone has eaten.

The amazing support we get from Georgetown proves that we are a community that cares. I am so proud of our community!

—*Gunther Stern*

GMC Featured in the Washington Post

In case you missed it, the Washington Post published an article on March 6 about the work of GMC and executive director Gunther Stern. To read the full story, visit gmcgt.org/about-us/media and select: *In Georgetown, the homeless can be hidden amid the million-dollar homes.*



Some Like it HOT

The Hypothermia Outreach Team (HOT), a Georgetown University Center for Social Justice and GMC effort, had a successful winter of street outreach. When the temperature drops below 32 degrees, student volunteers check on homeless individuals, look for signs of hypothermia, encourage them to utilize GMC and city resources, and hand out socks and blankets. Two HOT volunteers, Seth Commichaux and Maddie Leonard, reached people in a meaningful way this winter and saved lives. Thank you, HOT volunteers!

“HOT is a great way to face your own preconceived notions and prejudices about people who are our neighbors, who endure a lot of stigma, by getting to know them and looking out for them on some cold DC nights.” —*Seth*

“Through HOT, I’ve gained a more complete picture of my local community. HOT and volunteering at GMC have allowed me to meet individuals facing issues of homelessness right here in my own neighborhood.” —*Maddie*



Another Year of Winter Shelter Success

As dinnertime approached, Christ Church volunteers made final preparations for winter shelter guests. Blankets and cots lined the walls, fresh flowers and silverware lay neatly on the tables and oven timers for chicken and homemade biscuits dinged as guests made their way into Parish Hall.

GMC's Winter Shelter was a place of refuge and fellowship Nov. 8 - March 27. Thanks to the involvement of ten local congregations, the shelter program rotated between churches every two weeks. Church volunteers and GMC shelter staff warmly welcomed guests by sharing meals and a safe place to spend the night. Patricia Seck, a GMC shelter monitor, says the program is much needed and keeps people out of harsh winter temperatures.

RJ, a shelter guest, expressed his gratitude for the GMC program: "During shelter season, I don't have to worry about food and shelter. And the volunteers work hard. It's amazing how much they do for us." Mario, another guest who frequently picks up his mail at GMC, said he greatly appreciates the winter shelter program and particularly enjoys the sense of community and chance to chat with the volunteers.

In addition to this gratitude, there was a sad irony associated with the end of winter shelter season on Easter Sunday. Mario said, "I woke up Sunday morning and had to walk out of here... pretty much back on the street to try to make it as best as I can." We look forward to the day when Mario will have a permanent home to call his own. The generosity of local congregations and their partnership with GMC goes a long way to keep some of the community's most vulnerable individuals off the street during the winter months, year after year. To get involved in this GMC program next winter, please contact us at info@gmcgt.org.

—Sarah Hartley

First Impressions: Sabrina and Ashley

If you stopped by the Center in the past month, you will have noticed two new faces - Sabrina Burrell and Ashley Lane. Sabrina is GMC's new case manager and has a Masters in Social Work and extensive experience working with people with emotional and mental health challenges, in addition to at-risk youth and families. Ashley is our new program coordinator and has many years of nonprofit volunteer and outreach experience. She is finishing up her Masters in Public Health degree. I sat down with them earlier this month to learn their first impressions of GMC.

What has surprised you most about GMC?

S: I'm impressed by the number of community resources and connections GMC has for people experiencing homelessness. I've also been surprised by the number of guests who want to obtain identification documents, a job, and stable housing. Many of the guests I work with don't want to be homeless forever. They want to return to a place of stability or start a career.

A: I love the way volunteers support GMC with their donations of time and food. Still, there are some days when we could use more sandwiches and occasionally there are days when we get too many. One of my goals for the coming weeks is to figure out how to coordinate this for more consistent coverage.

What inspires you about your work at GMC?

S: It's always inspiring to see one of our guests reaching out to help another - that's big! They often don't have a support system on the street, so it's a big deal to have someone that they know they can trust to not take advantage of them. It's really humbling to see from the outside.

A: Connecting with the guests and seeing the difference GMC makes in their lives makes me want to reach out to everyone I know to get them involved with GMC. I'm inspired to advocate for our organization so people know about the important work we do.

What are you most looking forward to?

S: I'm looking forward to continuing to help our guests as they make steps to improve their lives. I really enjoy walking with them through key moments, like visiting the human services office for their ID. It takes a long time, but I have greater empathy for what they're going through and they've told me that they appreciate having someone there to support them.

A: There are many opportunities to connect with other homeless service agencies, and I'm planning to start some sort of monthly series that helps our guests learn about these resources. I've also been talking to a few friends who are barbers and am hoping to get them in here a couple times a month to offer haircuts. Things like that help our guests feel like they're regular people in society.

We're excited to have Sabrina and Ashley on board and look forward to seeing the fruits of the many gifts and skills they bring to their work at the center. Feel free to stop by and say hello at any time!

—Katie Chatelaine-Samsen

Ways to Help GMC

Donate Money! Your financial contributions go a long way to fund our work. Donate by mailing a check or visiting www.gmcgt.org/help/donate.

Donate Time! Volunteer at our center with our shower/laundry program, offer a special skill, or visit one-on-one with our guests. Email us at info@gmcgt.org to learn more about our current volunteer needs.

Donate Items! Check out our in-kind wishlist at www.gmcgt.org/help/wishlist.

A Special Thank You to our Sandwich and Meal Donors

A filling sandwich, a bowl of hot soup, a piece of fresh fruit – all of this food is enjoyed by the guests at our center thanks to the generosity of our donors.



Our guests face food insecurity, meaning they don't always know where their next meal is coming from. Living on the street complicates their ability to purchase, store, and prepare food. Additionally, many have chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension that are exacerbated by poor nutrition or eating contaminated food from a trash can. The sandwiches, healthy snacks, and soups provided in our center give our guests access to nutritious food.

In the past year, this small but mighty group of donors – individuals, congregations, workplaces, and more – provided over 13,700 sandwiches and hundreds of meals at our winter shelter and day center! These sandwiches and meals represent countless hours of preparation and transport, thousands of dollars in ingredients, and a dedication to serving others. We are deeply grateful for the care these donors take to feed our guests!

If you would like to learn more about donating sandwiches or meals please contact Ashley Lane, Program Coordinator, at ashley@gmcgt.org or 202-338-8301 ext. 2.

GMC Board Leadership

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Pat Davies for her two years of leadership as president of the GMC board of directors. Pat has been a supportive presence at the center, participating in programs and connecting with guests. Additionally, she deepened our connections with the Georgetown community, particularly with the World Bank (her former employer) and Georgetown Presbyterian Church (her church home).

Alex Bullock (Georgetown Presbyterian) is our new board president and Jeremiah Cassidy (St. Paul's K Street) is our vice president. John Lange (Christ Church) continues to serve as our treasurer, and Page Robinson (Citizen's Association of Georgetown) is our new secretary. We also welcome new board members Warren Sedgwick (Mt. Zion United Methodist Church) and Richard Johnson (Christ Church).

Thanks to all board members for your gifts of time, talent, and leadership!

Board of Directors

Christ Church, Georgetown - Richard Johnson
Dumbarton United Methodist Church - Jennifer Whatley
Epiphany Roman Catholic Church - John Lehr
First Baptist Church, Georgetown - Vinette Saunders
Georgetown Lutheran Church - Connie Baker
Georgetown Presbyterian Church - Pat Davies
Georgetown University - Ray Shiu
Grace Episcopal Church - John Graham, ExOfficio
Holy Trinity Catholic Church - Ron Castaldi
Kesher Israel, Georgetown Synagogue - Amy Kauffman
Mt. Zion United Methodist Church - Warren Sedgwick
St. John's Episcopal Church - Jocelyn Dyer
St. Paul's K Street - Jeremiah Cassidy
St. Stephen the Martyr - Laura Wilson

From the Community

Citizens Association of Georgetown - Page Robinson
Georgetown Business Association - Elizabeth Webster
Georgetown BID - John Wiebenson
Georgetown Clergy Association - Mary Kay Totty
Treatment Advocacy Center - John Snook
Other Community Representatives -
Kathryn Cohen, Page Evans, James P. Jordan, Dorothy Preston, Sara Lemke-Vonammon, Susan Weber

Officers

President - Alexander Bullock
Vice President - Jeremiah Cassidy
Treasurer - John Lange
Secretary - Page Robinson

Staff

Executive Director - Gunther Stern
Case Manager - Sabrina Burrell, MSW
Development Director - Katherine Chatelaine-Samsen
Human Resources Specialist - Dymenn Venzor
Accountant - Catherine Payling
Communications Coordinator - Sarah Hartley
Program Coordinator - Ashley Lane
Shower Program Manager - Titilayo Adegoke, Marie Sylvestre

Consulting Physicians

Psychiatry
Ron Koshes, M.D.
Ross Goodwin, M.D.; Psychiatric Resident (GWU)
Family Practice
Catherine Crosland, M.D. (Unity Health Care)

Help Us Meet the Match!

The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, a core GMC supporter, upped the ante this year! After seeing how well GMC donors responded to their 2015 fundraising challenge, they increased the 2016 challenge by \$5,000. Between now and May 31, we need to raise **\$10,000** to receive a matching \$10,000 grant. Help us meet the match by making a donation, telling a friend, and asking them to make a gift to match yours.

Your gift makes a difference to the people we serve. Thank you for your support!

Save the Date!

The **2016 Spirit of Georgetown** will be held on **Thursday, October 13** at the lovely home of Karen and Bill Sonneborn (the Williams-Addison House). More details will be forthcoming, but please save the date.

We look forward to seeing you in October!

Georgetown Ministry Center
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