



January/February 2011

Director's Message: The Year in Review(s)

When Cole Merkel came aboard in early August as our new Jesuit Volunteer, he had no idea what he was getting into.

For that matter, neither did I.

For Cole had been here a scant few days when I was informed Operation Nightwatch was going to have to move from Julia West House and we ourselves could very well become homeless. I then had to break the news to Cole. I prefaced my remarks, "You happen to have come at a historic time for Nightwatch . . ."

Indeed, 2010 was historic in more ways than one. You've read about our various activities in these pages over the past several issues. But rather than tracing a simple outline of all that has distinguished this year, I thought I might trace events by recalling some of things written and said about us by others. Here are just a few of our "reviews:"

"On a regular basis I see volunteers giving guests advice on a variety of resource issues. I've seen social workers make visits. . . . I also see help being given with personal issues. I know that the staff and volunteers at Operation Nightwatch are held in [high] regard . . . because they are treated with . . . respect and compassion. . . ."

"Every staff member and volunteer of Operation Nightwatch care[s] deeply about every guest that comes through the door and we do our utmost to help them in every way that we can. We truly care about their futures."

--- Paul Cooper, "Nightwatch cares about guests," *The Oregonian*, 10/30/10

[In July, we launched our Mobile Hospitality Center:]

"It's a refreshingly condescension-free environment, with the non-homeless volunteers sitting on the pavement, joking

and eating floppy hot dogs with everyone else."

--- Sarah Mirk, "Homelessmobile," *The Portland Mercury*, July 29 – Aug. 4, 2010

[The Mobile Center even took a couple of jaunts to serve the homeless in Hood River:]

"This is real nice to have a place to rest and get something to eat. As a diabetic, I need food to take with my meds, and I was out of food."

--- Michael Moore, quoted by Kirby Neumann-Rea in "Hospitality for those in need," *Hood River News*, Sept. 1, 2010

[The members of our art workshop staged a major exhibition at Westminster Presbyterian Church:]

"Another champion of extending the conversation about homelessness beyond basic needs is Gary Davis, executive director of Portland's hospitality program, Operation Nightwatch.

"We're into connecting people's social needs," says Davis, noting the efficacy of their . . . arts workshops. 'We've used the arts workshops as an avenue of empowerment.'"

--- Devan Schwartz, "Homeless artists paint a new conversation," *Street Roots*, Sept. 3, 2010

[And then, of course, was THE MOVE. When we secured our new home, St. Stephen's issued a press release that contained the following:]

"Rev. Dr. Paul Davis, Minister for Outreach at St. Stephen's, said, 'Operation Nightwatch's mission to offer hospitality, hope, and healing to folks on the street echoes St. Stephen's desire to be a caring presence in downtown. Like Operation

Nightwatch, we want to be a place offering respect and friendship to those feeling marginalized and isolated. We're excited about the ways having Operation Nightwatch with us allows us to reach out in partnership together.' Rev. Dennis J. Parker, Priest in Charge at St. Stephen's, described the move as 'a blessing to the parish and the community.'"

[Will lives on the streets and gave a "heads up" about Nightwatch on his blog:]

"Operation Nightwatch is a ministry dedicated to easing the suffering associated with social isolation among Portland's homeless community. Please join us there, Thursday through Saturday, from 7.00 pm to 11.00 pm. Homeless Will has been known to drop by. So should you!"

...Will@homelessinportland.tumblr.com/

[Several of our volunteers have contributed their own reviews online about Nightwatch, including this one:]

"Operation Nightwatch puts a face on homelessness. Each evening I talk with guests whose lives have taken some awful turns. Some I see every month; and they have become friends. Volunteering here reveals an additional dimension of diversity that I would not experience any other way.

"I support this ministry financially as well because I know it is run on a shoestring, and most of the money goes to doing good for those we serve. And, because I'm involved as a volunteer, I get to see those dollars doing good every day. . . ."

"THANK YOU Operation Nightwatch for making a difference for so many in Portland, and for the

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(Director's Message continued)

chance to know and love people that I'd otherwise look away from."

--- Dan Vetter, at GreatNonProfits.org

As it happens, you can contribute your own review too, just as Dan did, by going to GreatNonProfits.org and finding the page dedicated to "Operation Nightwatch Portland." By contributing your comments, you'll be performing a much greater service than simply saying something to make us feel good. Potential funders and volunteers will also assess your comments, and when they read how highly you value Nightwatch, they may decide we are worthy of their support as well.

And if that happened, wouldn't that make for a great 2011?

Gary L. Davis

ROGER FUCHS ORDINATION, JANUARY 29

Roger Fuchs, who has faithfully dedicated himself to serving the spiritual needs of our guests for the past four years as Nightwatch chaplain will be recognized for this ministry by his denomination, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in a service of ordination on Saturday, January 29. The service will be held at Resurrection Lutheran Church, 1700 NE 132nd Ave. (near Halsey), beginning at 11:00 a.m.

All are invited to attend and celebrate this big day, both in Roger's life and in the life of Nightwatch.

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

Our 2010 Annual Report will soon be sent out to those who supported Nightwatch in 2010, but copies will also be sent to anyone upon request. The Annual Report will also be posted on our Web site:

www.operationnightwatch.org.

From the Program Coordinator

Operation Nightwatch's monthly outing programs provide our guests an outlet to escape the urban jungle for at least a few hours every month, finding solace and tranquility in a natural setting with a full lunch provided. Since arriving in Portland I have enjoyed veggie burgers with our guests at Cape Lookout State Park, at our annual barbecue, and basking in the edenic beauty of Silver Falls. In 2011 we'll be going bowling, to a Portland Timber's game, to Tualatin Hills Nature Center and to Camp Adams for Operation Nightwatch's annual Spiritual Retreat (just to name a few).

My favorite part about the outings is that they give me the chance to spend more one-on-one time with Nightwatch guests; much like our guests leaving the chaos of the urban core, I too am able to relax. Since I'm not trying to monitor the movements of sixty different people, while making sure the strict schedule of sandwich and clothing distribution is adhered to, I have more of a chance to fully engage in the lives of those I serve.

During our October outing to Silver Falls I spent most of the day hiking the park with and listening to the story of one guest in particular. "Brian" opened up to me about his history of addiction; how it had brought out the crippling schizophrenia that had forced him to hide from the world for over a year. While trying to stay clean, Brian's been having problems with his ex-wife as he attempts to regain visitation rights with his four-year old son—a boy whom he hasn't seen in over a year.

As we sat beside the Lower South Falls, the only two people in what seemed like miles, Brian said he couldn't remember the last time he'd felt so happy. That revelation shook me. Here was a man whose life was full of pain and sadness. Yet simply by changing his surroundings and having someone listen intentionally to his story, he was able—even for just a few hours—to feel happy again.

In our ministry of hospitality, we are not trying to change people; we are simply providing a safe space so

that change may take place from within. Sometimes, it seems, this change can come in simple actions: through a full belly, a tranquil exterior space and a fully engaged ear.

Cole

THANKS TO CHRISTMAS PARTY VOLUNTEERS

We had some apprehension about our recent Christmas Party. Since it came so soon on the heels of our move, would our guests be confused about when and where the party would be held and not make it there?

But about 130 people showed up, and this year's party seemed like the most smoothly run that we ever had. Everyone was well-fed, a good spirit abounded, and most everyone had fun. And that was even *before* we started doing karaoke!

We'd like to thank all the volunteers who made it possible, preparing the food and serving it. Special thanks are extended to:

Pegge Papsco, for supervising the kitchen and bringing all the pieces together to make them work

Bergen Allee, who served as our Volunteer Coordinator

Charlie Ross, who again provided his piano-playing skills to build a festive mood

Gene Ross, our carol director

And the members of Bridlemile Girl Scout Troop #40671, who for the 17th year prepared our Christmas stockings for distribution

OUR CURRENT WISH LIST

Sleeping bags
Athletic Shoes/boots (esp. larger men's sizes)
Backpacks
Tarps
Sweatshirts (esp. hoodies)
Lip balm
Canned soups/chili, saltines (for soup supper on Bible Study nights)
Gift cards, movie passes, etc. (for prizes to offer at game nights)

[PLEASE: NO pants, shirts, T-shirts, underwear, women's clothes. These donations only create an additional burden for us.]

SPONSORS SOUGHT FOR 2011 OUTINGS

We want to thank those who have contributed to become sponsors for this year's monthly outings. The outings are certainly highlights in the lives of our guests, as they remove them from the routine of day-to-day struggles and expose them to places and opportunities that would otherwise be outside their means to enjoy.

As the table shows, half of this year's events already have underwriters. But half of the outings (including January's) are still unsponsored. We would welcome your support. (You can be a partial sponsor, as well as a full sponsor.)

MONTH	OUTING	SPONSOR
January	Miniature Golf (\$175)	
February	Bowling	Al Bowen
March	Pearson Air Museum (\$150)	Jenny Pietka (\$100)
April	Tualatin Hills Nature Park (\$100)	
May	Milo McIver State Park (\$150)	
June	Spiritual Retreat	Lake Oswego United Church of Christ
July	Portland Timbers (\$150)	
August	Fort Stevens State Park (\$200)	Gerry & Madeline Grimm
September	Annual BBQ – Food (\$300)	
October	Columbia Gorge (\$150)	Ken & Frances Grillo
November	Camp Adams Day Trip (\$100)	Dave Slocum
December	Christmas lights (\$150)	

HONORARY GIFTS

The following have contributed to Nightwatch in honor of family and friends:

<u>DONOR</u>	<u>GIVEN IN HONOR OF:</u>
George and Susan Durrie	David and Ginny Gaines
David and Ginny Gaines	Tom and Alice Gaines
David and Ginny Gaines	George and Susan Durrie
David and Ginny Gaines	Rick and Tori Gaines, Hailey Brown
David and Ginny Gaines	David and Debbie Canning
Richard Tracy	Carol Tracy
Russell and Gloria Cooper	Ginny Gaines

CLEAN-UP/FIX-UP/PAINT-UP DAY FOR ST. STEPHEN'S, MARCH 5

In moving our Hospitality Center to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, we feel that we have truly found a home.



The people of St. Stephen's continue to prove themselves to be warm, welcoming, and accommodating for all we've sought to do.

But now that St. Stephen's has become our home, we feel a responsibility to keep it in shape. On Saturday, March 5, we are inviting volunteers to join us in a Clean-Up/Fix-Up/Paint-Up Day to spruce up the place and make into a truly hospitable spot for our guests and all others who come to St. Stephen's.

Everybody can lend a hand. Let's see how many we can get out, and transform the surroundings!



NONVIOLENT CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING, FEB. 5

Our next Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training will be held at St. Stephen's on Saturday, February 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If you have an interest in becoming a member of our Street Hospitality Teams, this training is required. But its lessons are handy for all volunteers, teaching how to defuse situations of escalating tension, and how to intervene when a person acts out so that no one gets hurt. (Participants have reported how the lessons have proved helpful in many situations even beyond Nightwatch.)

The training is free. Please contact us if you would be interested in attending.

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Guests enjoying the Christmas Party

**NEWSLETTER
PRODUCTION TEAM**

Al & Gloria Bowen
Gary Davis
Madeline Grimm
Sheila Nichols



OPERATION NIGHTWATCH

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