



March/April 2011



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Respect.

That's not just the name of an Aretha Franklin song. It's also one of the virtues we work on defining us at Operation Nightwatch.

We seek to instill a sense of respect among our guests, of course. We tell them that if we had to distill all the rules of the Hospitality Center down into a single, simple one, it would be this: "In all my conduct and behavior, I will strive to respect all others around me."

But respect cannot be demanded. It can only be cultivated. And the best way to cultivate any virtue is to model it ourselves by practicing it in return.

A person learns what respect means by being respected, just as a person learns how to trust by being treated as trustworthy.

It's a simple principle, but it is one that is surprisingly practiced in very few other places, and it's one that has made Operation Nightwatch distinctive to those on the streets.

A couple of weekends ago, I brought out my laptop at the Hospitality Center and invited our guests to write a review of Operation Nightwatch. The object was to garner as many reviews as possible because an organization on the Web was running a contest that would award \$5000 to the non-profit that had the most reviews written about it by Feb. 28.

One fellow, Steve, came forward and a group of the curious gathered around him. On the laptop, I called up the online review form. Steve looked at the questions on the form. "What does this one mean?" he asked. "'Tell us what you do?'"

"It means to tell them what you do at Nightwatch," I said. "You know—you could say, 'Drink coffee,' 'Talk with friends,' 'Fill out review forms'—whatever."

"How about, 'Try to start riots?'" Steve kidded. "Or 'Sell drugs'? You wouldn't want that."

I know Steve to be a straight arrow, so I was aware he was joking. Nonetheless, I could imagine that with his sense of humor, he might write something just like that, thinking it was funny. But it was a moment to trust.

"Write whatever you want," I replied. "We don't engage in censorship here."

And as I walked away to give Steve privacy to choose what he wanted to write, I heard one of the guys in the surrounding group say, "Boy, they wouldn't let us get away with that in many other places!"

That led me to recall the comment made by one of the first guests who came to our Mobile Hospitality Center when we began taking it out on Friday nights. "When other guys who are camping out find out that you're here, they'll come flocking to you. And it's not because of the free food or anything. It's because you treat us like human beings."

It would seem like such a small thing to expect—to treat someone else like a human being. And yet it apparently is so rare, especially among those we serve. Is this why so many others have such a hard time understanding what we do at Operation Nightwatch—because what we do is so rare?

Sometimes we find our trust is misplaced. And sometimes we find our

respect is not reciprocated. But more often than not, those we treat as human beings respond just as humanely.

For here was Steve's review (which you can read, along with others, at www.guidestar.org):

Nightwatch provides a warm caring place for those who are homeless or underhoused. Warm Drinks, Food, Clothing and a safe social environment can be enjoyed by anyone. The Director, Gary, was kind to help me establish an email account. Thank You very much!

Gary L. Davis

WISH LIST

Given our Oregon weather, what our guests could really use is wet weather gear.

And needless to say, our demand for blankets and sleeping bags is constant. We can never have enough.

Our supply of personal hygiene items is running low—we could especially use razors, lip balm, and soap.

We never have enough men's athletic shoes, and requests often have to go unfilled.

Our guests are also eager for reading material. Those donating books and magazines, however, should be aware that our guests are predominantly male—romance novels and women's magazines are not very helpful.

For a look at our full Wish List, please go to www.operationnightwatch.org/wishlist.html.

FROM THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

When Operation Nightwatch was forced to move last November, we did not fully realize how much our ministry's values aligned with our new home, St. Stephen's Episcopal Parish. But as watching our programs begin to mesh over the last three months, we've realized how perfect it is that Nightwatch is now housed in St. Stephen's.

St. Stephen's has been an incredibly open and welcome space for our guests of all ages, races, genders, abilities and orientations. Integrity, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer-inclusive group for members of the Episcopal Church holds its monthly meetings at St. Stephen's, and has been a great resource for Spectrum, Operation Nightwatch's own support group for LGBTQ-identifying people living on the streets and their allies.

In terms of social justice, St. Stephen's has truly been proactive at feeding and empowering people experiencing homelessness. For more than a decade the St. Stephen's Table program has been hosting a chili lunch on Tuesdays and a breakfast on Saturdays for the neighborhood's low-income friends. Recently, the Table has been serving more than 100 meals per session. When I scan the crowd on Tuesdays I often see many of the same faces at chili lunch that come in to Nightwatch on weekends. Two parishioners of St. Stephen's, Mary and Barbara, have been making the bologna sandwiches we serve at Operation Nightwatch for the past twenty years.

In addition to the twice-a-week meals, the church also hosts Communion in the Park every Sunday for people who are homeless and housed to attend together. Pastor Roger, who hosts the Nightwatch weekly worship service and Bible studies, often meets and sometimes

preaches with the folks at Communion in the Park—another area where our missions and programs overlap

As our future relationship with St. Stephen's develops I foresee our missions of hospitality continuing to combine. There has been talk of obtaining more food for Nightwatch from St. Stephen's Table through a new relationship with the Oregon Food Bank. We will both continue to serve as a safe haven for people to spend a few hours a week off the streets, in a warm, dry place full of laughter, friendship and, of course, Scrabble.

Cole



CELEBRATIONS

We are happy to report that due to the generosity of our supporters, we proved up to the task of raising the necessary matching funds to meet our share of the Murdock Charitable Trust Matching Grant. Thanks to all who contributed extra to help us meet our goal!

Jesuit Volunteer Corps NW has approved our application for another Jesuit Volunteer to serve our staff. That means when Cole's one-year term expires at the end of July, we'll have someone to take his place.

Since the publication of our last newsletter, we received a number of donations given to celebrate the lives of others:

GIVEN BY:	
Richard Thoms	In memory of Chris Thoms
Jan Standlea & Jane Lovelady	In honor of Dawn Hayami
Willie Kate Davis	In honor of Roger Fuchs
Sally Ann Schlachtenhaufen	In honor of Roger Fuchs
Anonymous	In honor of Roger Fuchs
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THANKS TO OUR 2011 OUTING SPONSORS

We would like to thank our generous donors for funding all our remaining outings (but one) in 2011.

The one remaining is our Christmas Lights outing in December. Our upcoming outings and their corresponding sponsors are:

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

MEMORIAL SERVICE,

APRIL 20

Our annual memorial service to remember our friends on the streets whom we lost over the past year will be held on Wednesday, April 20, at Downtown Chapel, 601 W. Burnside, beginning at 2 p.m.

All are welcome to attend.



LIFE AT THE HOSPITALITY CENTER

The following are excerpts from our nightly log:

“A very mellow evening that has been peppered by few disruptions. We’re clearing out early, but the crowd that’s still here is having fun.”

“Nathan just taught his first yoga class and although only three people attended they all seemed very relaxed and content when they left.

“Luke—a volunteer from last month—showed up with his friend Martin just to hang out. They’re playing chess now.

“I had a good conversation with V--. His grandparents knew Frank Sinatra before he was famous; they came from Sicily.

“Had a conversation with a new guest, P--, who has a Masters from OSU but lost his job, girlfriend, cars and condo in the Pearl when his company down-sized. Now he’s sleeping on the streets (He was in Pasadena for three months before returning to Portland) in the city he’s lived his entire life.” (Cole)

The energy was pretty tense tonight; I had a long conversation with R-- and gave him some mental health resources. M-- wanted me to tell T-- to take a shower because [of his body odor]. That is not in my authority.

“I’m beginning to more fully realize that heavy rain brings desperation with it.” (Cole)

“I just had a really fun conversation with John Hovius about history; We both want to end up in the same career—teaching high school history to underprivileged and “troubled” students.” (Cole)

“We set a record tonight! It was the first night serving more than 100 at St. Stephens, and at 116, it was the most I’ve ever served at once. (And I only had to kick out one person I suspected of being high!)

“T--’s vendor profile was featured in *Street Roots* this month. He gave copies out to all his favorite volunteers.” (Cole)

“Overall it’s been a pretty mellow night. I got to spend some time in Carmen’s art class’ L--’s made some pretty awesome glass pieces. He said whatever money he makes at the art show should be split amongst the other members of the group.” (Cole)



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**NEWSLETTER
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