



July/August 2011



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

One of the advantages of being downtown—especially in the neighborhood where the Hospitality Center is located—is that it is a great location for people-watching. Just in the walk from where I park my car a couple of blocks from the Center, I get to see a great diversity: everyone from well-coiffed condo-dwellers on their errands to Safeway, to down-on-their-luck pensioners huddling at the bus stop, to PSU couples exulting in young love as they walk arm-in-arm on their way to campus.

One day a few weeks ago, I had stopped at the curb for a traffic light and saw a young man across the street coming my way. Something behind me caught his gaze and a flash of recognition lighted his face. He called out someone's name. "Oh, hey!" I heard a response from behind. I glanced over my shoulder and saw a similarly-aged guy smile and wave.

Then I turned back and looked again at the fellow across the street. His pace had picked up as he came running in our direction. But it was the transformation that had captured his face that struck me. The fellow was smiling, yes; but there was more to his expression than that. His countenance positively beamed! Seeing his friend imprinted upon him the same expression I've seen people carry (as I myself no doubt have also carried) when, at the airport, they see someone with whom they have a deep connection coming off a plane.

Our faces betray us in such instances. They positively glow. The joy they hold can't be hidden. They demonstrate that this person with whom we are reconnecting is someone whose presence feeds our very being, someone whose place in our life is essential. We beam and glow because in reuniting with this person, we are reconnecting through him/her with a vital bond. This person is someone who nourishes us when otherwise we might be facing only empty hours—s/he is not only our antidote to loneliness, but can be the elixir stirring us towards our better self.

If someone asked what my dream was for Nightwatch, I'd say it would be to become the kind of place where our guests would be seen carrying that glow upon their faces. In other words, Nightwatch would be where they had built such connections with others that they knew they, too, had friends to feed their beings in their otherwise empty hours.

Our guests at Nightwatch lack many things—a dependable place to stay, reliable sources of nutritional food, adequate and clean clothing, somewhere they may regularly tend to their personal hygiene. But it's also been shown that many will willingly forego all those things for the sake of connecting with a friend. I hear from our guests of the loneliness they've suffered sometimes from the earliest age. Their histories are riddled by stories of parental neglect and abuse, rejection by peers, and condemnation by authorities. Should their self-destructive habits be any surprise when they feel no one cares? If only they had a friend!

When our guests come through the Nightwatch door, I would like to see their own faces betray the joy they feel because they know that here they reconnect with those who are vital to their lives. Here, at least for

some brief time, their better selves are recognized and celebrated and they are made whole. A friend, it's been said, is someone who understands your past, believes in your future, and accepts you just the way you are. When our guests come to Nightwatch, I want them to feel this is where they can rejoice in just such friends.

Gary Vaughan's favorite saying used to be, "I never saw a smiling face that wasn't beautiful."

I think of the glowing smiles dear friends show when reconnecting, and affirm that, yes, that's my dream for Nightwatch.

For I would agree that there's certainly nothing more beautiful than that.

Gary L. Davis

ACUPUNCTURE COMES TO NIGHTWATCH

Friday nights now offer an opportunity to our guests suffering from aches, pains, and stress. Danube Jacobs, a licensed acupuncture therapist, contributes her services.

On a typical evening, a dozen of our guests will take advantage of the occasion—and many come away singing its benefits after only a single treatment.

Danube is on the staff of Sanctuary Integrative Wellness Center in NW Portland. She is certified by the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association, and recently spent three months in Nepal volunteering at a no-cost medical clinic.



FROM THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

To serve as a Jesuit Volunteer means to commit to oneself to a year of sacrifice, discernment, reflection, connection and, of course, service. The experience can be a rollercoaster: simultaneously exhausting and exhilarating, difficult yet life-giving, infinitely challenging and entirely rewarding. Many JVs feel their experience is complete after one year. But for many reasons, I felt compelled to sign up for two.

In August I will be starting a position as vendor and programming assistant at Street Roots—Portland's newspaper for people experiencing homelessness. I'm sure you've seen the Street Roots vendors downtown selling newspapers; they are working with one of Portland's only income-empowerment organizations. For every dollar you spend, the vendor gets to keep seventy-five cents. If you've been to the Hospitality Center lately, odds are you've seen more than a few vendors hanging out. Next time you see a Street Roots vendor I would highly recommend purchasing a paper and having a conversation.

I spent a long time discerning my decision to work at Street Roots and spending another year as a Jesuit Volunteer. In the end, my strong desire to continue forming relationships with many of the folks I see each weekend at Operation Nightwatch, as well as the feeling of incompleteness toward my JV experience were strong enough reasons for me to recommit. The position at Street Roots should serve as a great intersection between the work I was trained to do in college—writing and editing—with the work of hospitality, presence and relationship-building I have so readily absorbed this past year at Operation Nightwatch.

This letter is not me saying good bye, it's more like saying see you later. I'm not going too far and I plan on spending many evenings dropping in as a guest of Nightwatch. I still have much to learn from this place, least of which is how to strategize for the game Othello. As Arnold says in those terrible movies, "I'll be back."

Cole

NIGHTWATCH RETURNS TO PORTLAND SUNDAY PARKWAYS, JULY 24

Portland Sunday Parkways is an event held on different dates in different areas of the city where the streets are shut down to usual traffic, opening them for people to walk, bike, and party on pavement usually ceded to cars.

Last year, Nightwatch sponsored an intersection when the Sunday Parkways event came downtown. That gave us an opportunity to literally wave the Nightwatch banner, hand out brochures (and our special Nightwatch fortune cookies!), and talk to some about what we do.

This year, the Parkways event in our area will be held on Sunday, July 24, and we intend to similarly sponsor an intersection.

The event runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. While we haven't been assigned our exact intersection yet, once that happens we'll let you know. We'd love to have you join us some time during the day to lend your support and to help us represent Nightwatch to the wider community.

CONCERT SERIES WILL BENEFIT NIGHTWATCH IN 2011-12

Beginning this fall, Portland Chamber Music will be holding a series of concerts at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, ticket proceeds of which will be split between Operation Nightwatch and St. Stephen's Table.

The dates for the concerts will be October 22, January 21, and April 21 (all Saturdays). They will begin at 8 p.m.

People may buy season tickets or tickets to individual concerts.

We'll be releasing more information in the near future. Watch for it!

Portland Chamber Music is committed to bringing "art to the people." Illustrative of that, each concert in our series will also invite a "guest artist" from among the talented street musicians in Portland.

STATISTICS DEMONSTRATE ONW'S RELEVANCE

The official results of 2011 Portland Homeless Count have been published, and they confirm what many perceived: numbers are growing among the homeless population. They are up roughly 8% from the last homeless count, taken two years ago. So Operation Nightwatch is still needed.

But there are other interesting things to note in the details. While the absolute numbers of homeless people have grown, places they are located continue to shift. Downtown used to be the epicenter of Portland's homeless. A couple of years ago, only 1/3 of Portland's homeless could be found downtown. The 2011 count shows the shift continuing; today, barely 1/5 can be found downtown.

Where is the greatest concentration of Multnomah County's homelessness to be found? In SE Portland, exactly where our Mobile Hospitality Center has been serving over the past year. Fully one-quarter of Portland's homeless can be found in SE.

The published results of the 2011 Homeless Count come on the heels of the 2010 Annual Homeless Assessment Report issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which showed that Oregon ranks #2 in its number of homeless as percentage of the larger population. Approximately 1 in every 200 Oregonians is homeless.

Couple all this with the fact that 2010 census has shown that the densest population in Portland is in the very neighborhoods abutting our downtown Hospitality Center (which happens to be inversely proportional to the number of low-income services available), and it becomes all-the-more apparent how critical ONW's work and presence is.

Nightwatch not only occupies a spot on the "continuum of care" provided by homeless agencies, but it fills holes where others do not go.

Our need for your support is more important than ever.

Thanks.

CHAPLAIN'S NOTES LOL? NLH!

Laughing out loud. LOL. I have probably sent fewer than 100 text messages in my lifetime. But I do text. And I know what some of the little abbreviations mean. BTW, they are everywhere these days.

Several months ago during prayer time at ONW Sunday worship, one of the guests prayed that he would be off the street soon and that he would never be homeless again. Someone laughed out loud. LOL. Sometimes the uphill battle can seem endless. We prayed anyway, just as we pray so often for work, for patience for the next step. We pray for hope, peace in the world, healing from storms and tsunamis.

So how has it all worked out? A guest out of work for over two years recently began full-time employment. With benefits. The guest whose prayer request drew the LOL response is now in another state. Reunited with family. Indoors. Has a driver's license. Working. Off the streets. NLH: no longer homeless. It happens, and we keep praying. We also get the joy of praying that other short prayer that's more useful than we know: TBG. It's my own abbreviation: "Thanks Be To God!"

There are some great words to ponder in Proverbs 22. I like v. 27: "If you have nothing with which to pay, why should your bed be taken from under you?" Amen. We keep praying. TBG.

Pastor Roger

WISH LIST

People don't think about donating blankets in the summer. After all, it's not cold anymore—is it?

It is if you're sleeping outside. And the demand upon us for blankets is just as high.

So here's what we currently need most:

BLANKETS
Razors
Shampoo
Lotion
Sunscreen

VOLUNTEERING: IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE HOSPITALITY CENTERS!

We naturally tend to talk a lot about the Hospitality Center and the Mobile Hospitality Center. But you likely be unsurprised to find out that much behind-the-scenes work is required in order to provide open doors to our guests each night. And there is plenty that can be done in that behind-the-scenes work as volunteers.

So maybe you'd like to help us out but don't like the idea of coming out at night. Here are tasks that would be of inestimable worth to us you could also do—some even from the comfort of your own homes!

Data entry (volunteer info, processing donations, etc.)

Preparing mailings

Web site maintenance

Graphic design and production (brochures, posters, event tickets)

Contacting churches, neighborhood and business associations to schedule Nightwatch speakers/programs

Make sandwiches as part of our Tuna Team

Launder the towels we weekly use in cleaning

Run errands (do supplies shopping, food pick-ups, run to the Oregon Food Bank)

Care for the Mobile Hospitality Center vehicle (clean, service, maintain)

With such a variety of opportunities, everyone can find a volunteer slot! Where can you help out? Let us know by giving us a call or sending a message.



At the Spiritual Retreat

GET THIS NEWSLETTER ONLINE!

Did you know that about a quarter of our supporters now receive this newsletter online?

There are advantages on both ends when people take the e-version over the postal version:

E-subscribers get their newsletter earlier.

The postal version is an abridged edition. Those who get the e-version get more comprehensive coverage, including colorful pictures and links to other relevant sites.

There's no need to recycle the e-version.

If you're tired of receiving the newsletter, recipients of the email version merely have to click an "Unsubscribe" button.

On our end, the email version carries no mailing costs. In fact, it costs us nothing!

If you would like to switch over to the email version, just let us know. Call, text, or email. (We'll also receive your stamped mail.)

BOOK YOUR TRAVEL RESERVATIONS THROUGH GOODSHOP, AND GIVE ONW A BOOST!

Are you going on a trip this summer? Did you book your reservations through a Web site like Travelocity, Orbitz, Expedia, Priceline, or Hotels.com? Or for your flight, did you go directly to an airline site?

Next time, go to your favorite Web site through GoodShop.com, and even with the best bargain you can work out, Nightwatch will receive a percentage of the sale.

Go to www.goodshop.com, and when you are asked, "Who do you GoodShop for?", type "Operation Nightwatch Portland." Then find your favorite vendor. From here on, the process is exactly the same as if you went to the vendor directly—only once you make the purchase, ONW will get back a check!

It costs you nothing, but it will benefit us a lot!

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LIFE AT THE HOSPITALITY CENTER

Here are Cole's recent notes from our logbook:

"I talked with T--, who seemed incredibly sad without L.B. She likes to write, but hasn't done it in a long time. She thanked me for spending time talking with her, that it gets lonely in her apartment, and I told her that even when I've got a million things going at once, she can always seek me out. She's an incredible woman with some great stories and I look forward to hearing more of them. The thing that I find interesting about T-- is that unlike many of the conversations I have, the ones with her tend to be two way; she legitimately wants to learn more about me as much as I want to learn about her.

"In terms of conversations, I only was able to make one real connection tonight with J.B. who told me more about his girlfriend, the pain of his past and showed me a few of his tattoos. He's told me in the past that he loves every one of his tattoos; they tell the story of his life."

OPERATION NIGHTWATCH

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