

Heart ♥ to ♥ Heart



Vol. 7, No. 16

November 2022

As we approach the celebration of Thanksgiving in the United States, our thoughts turn to the abundance which blesses so many of us and to those who continue to struggle for the basic necessities of life. Living with “an Angela response to the reality of our times,” means living with hearts and eyes wide open to the ways we can reach out to those in need. This issue of Heart to Heart focuses on an Angela response to the needs of the homeless and the hungry.



Ministry Among the Homeless

Julie Hickey, OSU, reflects on her twelve years of ministry at Haven for Hope (www.havenforhope.org), a 22-acre campus in San Antonio, TX, that serves people who are experiencing homelessness.

For the past twelve years, I have ministered to persons who are homeless. Initially when I began the ministry, I thought I would be the one giving and helping others. What I have learned is the “mutuality of ministry” as Henri Nouwen states it. As I reflect on this mutuality, I realize persons who are homeless taught me...

- to be grateful for little things,
- to be patient and wait,
- to not try to do it alone whatever it might be,
- to share one’s story and to listen to another’s story,
- to be sensitive to another’s pain,
- beyond the rage and anger, to trust God.



As a daughter of Angela, the words of Angela became a lived reality . . .

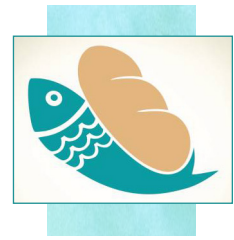
“You have a greater need to serve (the poor/homeless) than they have of your service.”

—Julie Hickey, osu



Ministering to the Hungry

The following reflections are from colleagues responding to opportunities to meet the challenge of food insecurities in their local area. Both reflections share the many needs in a California county perceived as wealthy and where the poor and needy live in the shadows.



“Loaves and Fishes”

The “Loaves and Fishes” program germinated in the hearts of two men, Bob Puett and Tom Brawley, and parishioners of St. Anthony’s, Novato, CA, in tandem with Marin San Francisco Food Bank in April of 2020. Their first distribution of food was on June 15, 2020. With the onset of Covid, the principal distribution location at Marin Community Health Hub, became overwhelmed with 3 times an increase in clients seeking food support. “Loaves and Fishes” began with distribution to 100 clients weekly and rapidly increased to 200 by October 2020. Many of our volunteers are retirees and are challenged by the weight of the bags, or by the heat and other physical requirements of our outreach. However, the sincere

appreciation shown each week by regular and new clients definitely compensates for the sore muscles.

In spring/summer of 2021 the need gradually decreased to 130 clients weekly. However, the arrival of the Delta and Omicron Covid variants, followed by the dramatic and rapid increase in the cost of food and gas, led to a return to 200 clients per week. Now we are routinely running out of food 30-45 minutes before our scheduled closing time. Food insecurity is real -- even in a place like Marin County. There are now four distribution locations for fresh fruit and vegetables plus protein in Novato provided through Marin San Francisco Food Bank.

—Marilu Mazzotta
Cursillo 4th Day Group

“Extra Food”

Even though Marin in northern California is recognized as one of the wealthiest counties in the country, one in five people in our population of 260,000 worries about where his/her next meal will come from. Conversely, it is estimated that 30 percent of the food supply in our county is wasted, which is on the low end of the nation’s average food waste of between 30-40 percent of the total food supply. The United States discards more food than any other country in the world.

One man, Marv Zauderer, came up with a solution to these two problems and founded a non-profit organization called “Extra Food” whose mission it is to end hunger and food waste in Marin. Donations pay for a director and a small team of coordinators. A large and growing team of volunteers checks onto a web portal every Sunday morning to select trips from the list of that week’s matched food donors and recipients. Donors include restaurants, bakeries, delis, grocery stores, schools, hospitals, gardens,

etc. Among the recipients are non-profit organizations that serve the homeless, provide temporary housing for abused women and their families, and facilities that provide care for low-income elderly, children, and mentally challenged adults living in group homes.

My husband and I, like many, felt helpless to address the overwhelming problem of hunger and homelessness that is evident all around us. We learned about “Extra Food” from a friend who is a volunteer. We signed up, and on every food run we meet people who are struggling, either temporarily or permanently, but who always show deep appreciation for the food that is brought to them. It brings a smile to their faces, and we leave with a big smile on our faces as well, and the feeling that we have at least put a dent in the problem that plagues our communities today. If you are interested in beginning an organization like “Extra Food” in your community or would simply like to know more about its operation, information may be found at www.extrafood.org.

—Kathy Kafka
Novato, CA

Ursuline Schools Reaching Out to the Homeless and Hungry

*Outreach to the homeless and the hungry is a lived commitment
at each of our USA Roman Union schools.*

[Academy of Mount St. Ursula, Bronx, NY](#)

Each year for Thanksgiving, AMSU partners with POTS (Part of the Solution), a neighborhood soup kitchen that feeds and cares for the homeless of the Bronx. During a November “Canned Food Drive,” students, parents and faculty bring in donations of canned goods and non-perishable items that provide extra support to POTS’ food distribution during the holidays.



[Mount Merici Academy, Waterville, ME](#)

In their strong *Serviam* tradition, Mount Merici’s junior high students volunteer weekly at The Lighthouse. The Lighthouse is Waterville’s local soup kitchen that serves approximately 140 clients daily. The students serve, eat, clear, and socialize with the clients.



[The Ursuline School, New Rochelle](#)

Since April 2020, The Ursuline School has organized, scheduled and run bi-weekly *Serviam* Saturday food drives to help the food-insecure in the surrounding area. This is especially important because food insecurity has become an even greater problem in the wake of Covid. These drives support organizations in the surrounding areas, both near and far, who directly serve the most vulnerable.



[Ursuline Academy, Dallas, TX](#)

The Academy’s Service Learning class held a day focusing on the United Nations Sustainability Goals. The day included input on hunger and poverty worldwide, followed by a speaker from *Rise Against Hunger*, and the opportunity to pack meals for the hungry. In the afternoon, students learned about local needs and volunteered at one of the city’s St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Stores.

[Ursuline Academy, Dedham, MA](#)

Monthly, the Academy takes 12 students and staff members to serve in the kitchen at Community Servings in Jamaica Plain. Community Servings provides healthy meals for those living with HIV/AIDS, by preparing scratch-made medically tailored meals to those experiencing critical or chronic illness and nutrition insecurity. Students learn about the organization, and serve by packaging prepared food, labeling, sorting and organizing meals to be delivered to those in need.



[Ursuline Academy, New Orleans, LA](#)

The Academy’s junior class partners with a local food bank and several other organizations to directly serve the needs of the poor and homeless in the community. At other times, Academy students served meals at New Orleans Mission and handed out toiletry kits to people residing on the streets and participated in an Academy Wide Food Drive that donated almost 2,000 lbs. of food to Second Harvest Food Bank.



[Ursuline Academy, St. Louis, MO](#)

The Academy partners monthly with St. Vincent DePaul Parish to bag snacks for their lunch window program. Corporations donate large bags of snacks and Ursuline has 20-25 students each month bag them into smaller portions, and always begin by praying for those who receive the meals. Some students also volunteer after school with Ursuline’s music teacher to provide musical entertainment during the parish’s dinner program.



[Ursuline Academy, Wilmington, DE](#)

At an October faculty in-service day, the faculty and staff made lunches for the homeless. Later in October, students and some of the Academy’s staff went into Camden, NJ, to serve the homeless and to bring them food.

Food Insecurity Impacting Infants

Follow this link for an interview with Helene Butler Mulholland, an alum of the Academy of Mount Saint Ursula in the Bronx, on the impact of food insecurity on infants: www.fox5ny.com/video/1126836.

Prayer of Gratitude and Longing

(Jane Deren)

God of Justice and Love,
We pause a moment to call to mind
That we are in your presence.
We pause to thank you
For the many blessings you offer to us:
The sun,
The smile and greeting of a neighbor,
The love of family and friends,
The community we are to one another.



We pause to remember that we live in a world
Which is not yet as you would have it
Despite all our advances of culture and technology.

We still place profit and gain before
People and environment.
We wage war on our sisters and brothers,
Whether it take the form of sanctions or suicide bombings.
Men and women continue to live without the most basic necessities:
Shelter,
Food,
The opportunity to work,
The most basic health care.

To live with eyes open is to see a world
Which groans under the burden of oppression.
And yet, we pause to remind ourselves
That hope lives – that hope has always shined
Through the cracks of our broken world.

We pray that you grant us the grace to be ministers of this hope,
That we may shine in your service,
That we may be yeast to a world in need of lifting,
Agitation to a world which can rest too easy in false comfort,
Agents of empowerment to those who feel they have none.

We pray that our world will awake from blindness, ignorance, and apathy,
And reawaken with new vision, compassion, and action.
We pray that we may be instruments to your will.
That through our work the world may know you,
Your power, and most importantly, your love.
Amen.

Ignatian Solidarity Network
www.educationforjustice.org
(Used with permission)

For Reflection

How might I might respond in my local area
to the needs of the hungry and the homeless?