DEPAUL USA OPENS PERMANENT HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN PHILADELPHIA

Depaul USA opened its newest project—St. Raymond’s House in Philadelphia—on September 29th. St. Raymond’s will provide 27 units of permanent supportive housing to some of the city’s neediest men and women. The target population is the aging cohort of men and women in shelters with chronic health concerns and behavioral health issues.

St. Raymond’s House is located in a former convent that had been empty for five years. It now positively shines after a million dollar renovation. The building features a commercial kitchen, communal dining hall, a conference room, and the Loralee West Community Room. Each residential floor has a kitchenette and state-of-the-art communal restrooms. The bedrooms are light-filled and spacious and fourteen are accessible to residents with wheelchairs. The second floor will be reserved for women and the third floor will be for male residents.

The project, which took five years to complete, was made possible by a generous coalition of foundations and individuals as well as the Department of Housing and Urban Development Supportive Housing Program/Philadelphia Office of Supportive Housing, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, and the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York City.

Daybreak welcomes Sister Catherine Norris, D.C. as Program Director

Sister Katie Norris has dedicated her life to working with the poor. Her social work skills are a great asset to Daybreak, along with her leadership and vision. She hopes to see growth in support for Macon, and “widen the circle to include more supporters (churches, universities and individuals) to share in our ministry. The inclusiveness of Daybreak is what makes it special and also the thing that will ensure its continued success.” Prior to joining Depaul USA, Sister Katie worked with DePaul University in Mission and Values and was the Director of the St. Vincent de Paul Center for Social Services.
From the Helm

Dear Friends,

As the fall edition of Homeward hits your mailboxes, homelessness is very much in the news. Yesterday, the New York Times reported on a surge in homelessness in Madison, Wisconsin and the contentious political battle pitting Mayor Paul Soglin against many city council members as the city struggles to respond. The Roman Catholic Church and the City of New York also just announced an initiative to provide 150 new beds this winter for people who have been sleeping on city streets. On September 22, the City of Los Angeles declared a public emergency in response to rampant homelessness. Finally, this week, the media has been full of stories of Pope Francis’ outreach and advocacy for the homeless during his visit to the US.

I follow these developments with great interest. I try to learn what policy makers and providers are proposing in response to homelessness as well as how the public perceives the problem. I always hope that the media attention will result in more programs — and more importantly — more effective programs. Having been at Depaul USA for five years now, I know to temper this hope. Articles about homelessness seem to run in cycles. Today, they dominate the headlines. In a few days, the caravan moves on.

Depaul USA does not move on. Our purpose is to eliminate homelessness. In this edition of Homeward you will read about our programs across the country. There is news about our new housing development in Philadelphia, Linda’s journey to independence in St. Louis, and how homeless Macon students are pursuing their education.

In the midst of all this information, you will find an envelope. If you believe in what we are doing or are moved by what you have read, please consider making a donation to Depaul USA. As we enter the fourth quarter, we still need to raise funds so we can provide free health care in Macon, send case workers to check on our residents in New Orleans, and keep more students in Chicago from sleeping on the El.

As always, thank you for your support and your interest in our work.

Chuck Levesque
President/Executive Director

MMI Foundation Names Maconites Volunteers of the Year

Stone Mountain, Georgia-based Mission and Ministry, Inc. (MMI), a foundation of the Province of St. Louise of the Daughters of Charity, bestowed the St. Louise de Marillac Service Award for Outstanding Volunteers on Kay Gerhardt and Gary Musolf of Macon, Georgia. Foundation officials gave the awards at the MMI national conference in September. Ms. Gerhardt and Mr. Musolf were recognized for their service at Daybreak, Depaul USA’s day/resource center for homeless men and women in Macon. MMI cited their work in establishing the Daybreak program, leading the capital campaign that funded the purchase and renovation of the building, generating community support for the program, and providing guidance and direction to Depaul USA’s board of directors.

“I am very honored to receive this award,” Musolf said. “It is a pleasure to be associated with Daybreak and its work to end homelessness—work that is inspired by the life of St. Louise de Marillac.”
Father Pat Talks Vincentian Values

This year, we bring to the US a Depaul International training program beginning a new tradition of sharing our history and inspiring staff. The Vincentian Values Course is an annual, two-part program of reflective learning focused on values and leadership — based on our Vincentian heritage and our founders. In the course we learn or re-learn our values. We will also learn about leadership — about leading oneself first and about leading others — all in the manner of Vincent de Paul.

Is there homework?
Yes, of course! Besides some short readings, everyone completes a project through their work in Depaul programs during the year and reports it to the group at the end of the course. The projects should improve service to our clientele or staff in some practical way. We learn by listening and discussing, and putting our words into action. This is how we pass on our 400-year-old tradition of service to the poorest of the poor.

How does this happen?
In the training, we tell stories — about Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac, Frederic Ozanam, ourselves and other heroes. We make presentations, complete learning exercises and instruments. We eat good food and have an occasional glass of wine together, and some people even sing songs.

What will participants learn?
Our values are rooted in the lives and work of Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac and Frederic Ozanam. Depaul’s values emerge from Vincent, primarily, crafted by the history and experience of Depaul as an organization over its 25+ years and the people who formed it. Through the course, we will learn the values and how we share them.

These quotes are from participants in last year’s values course. Depaul International has offered the course in Europe for more than ten years with similar results:

“A fantastic leadership course, the best I have been on. Great to connect with so many of the future leaders across Depaul.”

“Very rich. I loved being in a room filled with non-judgmental love and affection…. I had the opportunity to connect with colleagues that are working along with me on the mission — we are the movement. It was powerful.”

“The presentation made me evaluate my own leadership role, my strengths and areas for growth.”

Why do we do this?
Vincentian values are central to Depaul and not negotiable. We learn about our roots and values so we can serve our people better and treat each other — as Vincent said it — as very dear friends.
Ronald in New Orleans

Ronald grew up on the streets and followed the wrong people. He spent part of his young life living in two different group homes and hung out with people who were running in the wrong direction. At 14, Ronald ran away and was hit by a car at the lakefront. Ronald says he was partly dead and doctors told his parents that he would never walk, talk, breath or move again. Ronald was in a coma for four months and for one year he suffered from seizures.

Today at the age of 37, Ronald considers the accident a blessing and a way that God acted in his life. He sees his life mission is to bring people to God and to use his disability to show others that they can overcome any obstacle. Ronald says, “I’m here for other people to look at me and see that they can overcome difficulty and move on straight.”

Ronald comes to the Depaul USA Rebuild Center in New Orleans because he feels the people have a heart for loving someone else and for caring for others. You will often hear Ronald break out into prayer.

The Understanding of my life

By Ronald in New Orleans

As I look in the mirror and see the beauty of truth, I go back to the days when I would have been lost
But I trust you, my God
I could have run with the people I saw on the streets
But there was something about the rearrangement of my life and your Spirit over me.
It’s like you have closed my eyes to the world called “no hope”
And then opened my eyes, and I see hope.
God, you are wonderful. You are so beautiful to me
You are the truth
If it weren’t for you, I’d be choosing hell and falling away with the fallen crew.
Acknowledging you—The Understanding of my Life.
“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son
that whosoever believes in him
Shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Linda’s Move-on – St. Louis

Because of Depaul USA I am moving on to a new chapter of my life. In August 2011, when I was leaving [a local shelter], I had the opportunity to get linked with Depaul USA [Permanent Supportive Housing Programs]. It is a program that helps you to build yourself up and start anew.

I was fresh in my recovery and scared of how I was going to make my life work without using. I had a job but not enough money to pay bills and all of my rent, and I had no government assistance because of my income. I met these wonderful people who helped me by making sure I had all the support needed to live independently. Without this program, I would never have been able to live on my own and survive. They helped me with my bills, made sure I made it to doctor appointments, and listened to me about all of my problems. I could count on them to go to the grocery store with me, pick up medications; whatever I needed, they would help me in the process. They showed me I could make it on my own again.

As of August 2015, I left Depaul USA, to be completely independent. For the past four years, they have been a family to me. I will miss them, but I know I can always look back and remember all the good they have done for me. I thank them for believing in me.
Community Members Give Back

In October 2014, Philadelphia developed a Local Advisory Council of community stakeholders with the purpose of supporting and growing Depaul USA’s presence in our city. Members of LAC have many skills and areas of expertise that they are contributing that are helping us provide resources for the people we serve in our Philadelphia programs.

The history of Depaul USA began in Philadelphia when Depaul House, a transitional housing program, opened in April 2009. On September 29th, Depaul USA opened St. Raymond’s House, a permanent supportive housing program that will serve 27 chronically homeless men and women with chronic illness.

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“Associating with Depaul USA means associating with people who know how to get things done.”

- Bob Lankin, an LAC member
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The last LAC meeting was held at St. Raymond’s House and one member, Bob Lankin, commented, “I think the program wowed the committee. The talent and expertise required to pull off such a project [St. Raymond’s] is unbelievable. Associating with Depaul USA means associating with people who know how to get things done.”

However, it is the talent and expertise of members of the LAC that also helps get things done. Mr. Lankin has rallied support from Rotary Clubs and the Masons to host a picnic for Depaul House residents every year. He has also made possible a matching grant that will fund a computer lab at St. Raymond’s. LAC member Bill Durham has been instrumental in procuring furniture from LaSalle University to help furnish St. Raymond’s House.

Jon Olsheski, a professional photographer and videographer, has volunteered to be our photographer at the “Feels Like Home” Fall Gala on November 14 at the National Liberty Museum. Andrew Haakenson came up with the idea of organizing a tool kit drive for residents to receive when they graduate.

The expansion of our programs in Philadelphia is exhilarating and has inspired great enthusiasm among our LAC. As Lanie Dilks, an LAC member said, “I am thrilled to have the opportunity to get involved with Depaul. I can’t imagine a more important cause than helping the homeless, particularly those who are chronically ill. I was so impressed with St. Raymond’s and look forward to the opening ceremony.”

It is with deep gratitude that we thank our LAC members. If you would like to attend a meeting or learn more about how you can become involved in the Local Advisory Council in your city, please contact Peggy Robertson at 215-438-1955, ext. 20 or email her at peggy.robertson@depaulusa.org.

Untying the Knots

In advance of the Papal visit, the Hunger and Homelessness Committee of the World Meeting of Families sponsored projects intended to leave a lasting legacy from the Pope’s visit. The Francis Fund funded this project, along with awarding Depaul USA a challenge grant to purchase a new passenger van.

In August of 2015, Depaul USA received its kit for the art project: 100 strips of fabric and instructions to write on them struggles or conflicts and to knot or weave the strips together. One volunteer, Christine McMenamin, took the lead in organizing the project at Depaul House in Philadelphia and brought in additional literature for residents about the artwork. Many were moved by writing their stories on the fabric strips. Andre, a Depaul House graduate, said, “This came just in time. Every day is a struggle for me. I feel like I’m always working just to keep my head above water.” Jasper, a resident said, “I need this. I need to remind myself to keep positive people and things in my life.”

Artist Meg Saligman with Depaul’s contribution

Christine gathered all of the strips and wove them into a lattice pattern. Seeing all of the various strips and handwriting reminded several people of our common struggles: to love, to be loved, to find peace, and to have good health. Christine said, “Many of the strips were very personal. Some just had a single word written on them, but I think they all demonstrated the faith that people have. People wrote their struggles and in doing that, they also showed us their belief that their situations could improve.”

Project HOME placed the sculpture on display temporarily in front of the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul in Philadelphia.

Support individuals facing homelessness in your community. Donate at www.depaulusa.org Depaul USA is a registered 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization.
Back to School – Macon, GA

Homelessness has no limitations in terms of age or ethnicity. It can happen to anyone at any time in this precarious world we live in. At Daybreak, we have a growing number of young adults who find themselves homeless but not hopeless. They are going to college in order to get that leg up that is needed today in our current economy. They attend classes at Miller-Motte Technical College, Middle Georgia State College and on-line. One young man is working with a volunteer tutor here at Daybreak to prepare for the GED test.

Most of these students camp along the river and come to Daybreak for breakfast, a shower, and to do school work. We provide them with a bus pass so they can get to class, and they in turn bring us their registration at the beginning of each semester and their grades at the end of the semester so we can rejoice with them. As they are in school and making progress, Daybreak supports them with bus passes, food and someone who cares about their progress.

Homelessness among college and university students is a growing problem across the country. Education is a proven way for people to escape poverty, and Daybreak is doing its part to encourage people to get the education that will enable them to be self-sustaining.

Irish Xiles Concert – St. Louis

On Saturday, August 23 Depaul St. Louis held the 2nd Annual Memorial Concert honoring Declan Duffy featuring the music of the Irish Xiles at Maggie O’Brien’s Restaurant and Irish Pub. Nearly 100 people attended the event, and enjoyed Irish pub music performed by Declan’s son, Steve Duffy. The event raised over $4,000 to support the Permanent Supportive Housing programs that give 80 formerly homeless people a place to call home. St. Louis staff honored steadfast supporter Jim Ryan with a volunteer appreciation award for his dedication and support of Depaul USA St. Louis.
Macon’s Tree Savings
Did you know Macon’s day center “Daybreak” has solar panels? In August, they saved eight trees. The carbon offset measured 648 lbs. This is the third month of improved efficiency from use of the solar panels and the Enphase device operating the AC units and hot water heater. The solar panel project was made possible by the generous support of the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters. The gift just keeps on giving.

Get Involved – Little Rock

Depaul USA’s Little Rock Day Center has increased its volunteer base from zero to nearly 50 in the past months, and we would like the numbers to continue to grow. Volunteers contribute to the progress of the center and the success of the participants, together they recognize each other as a part of a larger community.

Interaction between the homeless participants and volunteers reminds everyone that we all play a role in the wider community. The compassion, time, and donations of goods allow volunteers to positively impact the community. Volunteers have the chance to bridge the gap between mainstream society and the sometimes-unseen individuals facing homelessness. Both volunteers and clients come from diverse backgrounds and walks of life. Current volunteers at the day center represent local churches, the Experience Works program, probation enrollees, city employees, local hospital nurses, and our neighbors facing homelessness. This network comes together and nurtures a space for dialogue, cultural exchanges, and the development of both personal and professional relationships.

Whether it is one day a month or several days a week, volunteering reinforces our purpose and grows the community connections that soothe our hearts. Depaul USA’s day center in Little Rock, Jericho Way, welcomes you to consider contributing to the community through the act of volunteering.

Private.... ThaÎts
By Alford Brown
Private People...
  Private matters
Private lives...
  Private living
Private view...
  Private hearing
Private Pursuits...
Private Privates...
Private Privates
Previous Privates.
Proportional Private times.
Privacy! .... Priceless

Volunteers find great rewards when working with participants

Support individuals facing homelessness in your community.
Donate at www.depaulusa.org

Depaul USA is a registered 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization.
Save the date

“Feels Like Home” Saturday, November 14, 2015
Fourth Annual Fall Gala

National Liberty Museum

Philadelphia
Sandra Guillory, Director

Macon
Sister Katie Norris, D.C., Director

New Orleans
Sister Kathleen Driscoll, D.C., Director

St. Louis
Gretchen Shipp, Director

Little Rock
Sister Elizabeth Greim, D.C., Director

Chicago
Organization Headquarters

Executive Director
Charles W. Levesque

Director Of Operations
Kelli J. McGee

Director of Advancement
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Director of Finance
Didier Guigon

Depaul USA clients are Homeward bound!
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Depaul USA is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

Our vision is a world where everyone has a place to call home and a stake in his or her community.

Save the date! November 14th is our gala in Philadelphia!